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College

Composition and Communication

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN
JAN 13 1959

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THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE CONFERENCE ON
COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION



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College Composition and Communication is published in February, May, October, and December. Subscription price, \$2.00 per year, single copies, 75c. Entered as second class matter May 7, 1954, at the Post Office at Champaign, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Orders and business correspondence should be addressed to J. N. Hook, 704 South Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois. All other communications should be addressed to Francis E. Bowman, 324 Allen Building, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

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Grammarians Still Have Funerals

RALPH B. LONG¹

The grammarian is dead? Long live the linguist? We now have two highly publicized freshman texts done from the point of view of the New Linguistics: the Lloyd and Warfel *American English in Its Cultural Setting* (1956) and the Roberts *Understanding English* (1958). Extraordinary claims are made for the approach to grammar these books employ. Lloyd and Warfel tell us that "analytical tools of unimagined precision" are at the disposal of the New Linguists who have been giving "a cold scientific scrutiny" to linguistic structure. Roberts insists that the New Linguistics is a true science, though "somewhat less stable and controllable than physics or chemistry." Roberts takes a stern view of traditionalist grammar. Traditionalist grammarians "operated on intuition," were too much influenced by Latin, and held false notions of correctness. Their work is worse than useless, by and large: it is "essentially untrue." For this reason the word *grammar* lacks prestige among scholars. Roberts tells us that, "with a rather wide acquaintance among people who study language in one way or another," he has never met a single person willing to call himself a grammarian. "A person would just as soon call himself a con man or an alchemist as a grammarian." One chapter in *Understanding English* is entitled "Grammarian's Funeral."

I have called myself a grammarian for many years. I teach traditionalist grammar, and I stay as close to the grammar of the schools as I can. Until Roberts' book came along, it would not have occurred to me to compare grammarians—or even New Linguists, in spite of the extravagant claims many of them make for their work—with con men and al-

chemists. The only "analytical tools of unimagined precision" at present employed in linguistic analysis are in the hands of the laboratory phoneticians; and Lloyd and Warfel are distrustful of laboratory phonetics, like many phonemists and New Linguists, and warn us that "no machine" can pick out the signals "that really count for meaning."

There is still no better background for work in English grammar than solid training in Latin and its descendants; and though the importance of the work of Sapir and Bloomfield and their followers is clear, it is hard to see any notable usefulness to students of English in the odds and ends from Serbo-Croatian, Chinese, and Menomini which are included in the text books of such general linguists of this decade as Gleason and Hockett, or to be impressed by the grammatical analyses of contemporary English these books present. Traditionalist grammar must not be judged by what is taught in our schools. The grammar of the schools is more than a generation behind the times, whereas the tradition has reshaped itself constantly, as every tradition must. Tremendous industry and tremendous perceptiveness have gone into the work of such traditionalist grammarians as Curme, Jespersen, Palmer, and Poutsma.

We should take a look at the grammatical analyses presented in the Lloyd and Warfel and Roberts textbooks. Our judgment of the grammar given in these books should not be affected by our attitudes toward the authors' claims to present a grammar which, in some important new way, is "scientific." Everything is scientific now, from toothpastes to textbooks and from pedagogy to salesmanship.

¹Universities of Puerto Rico and Texas.

I

The first thing that should be noted is that there is still no convincing evidence that grammar is improved by being tied to phonemics. Both Lloyd and Warfel and Roberts give a great deal of space to phonemics. The real language, we are told, is composed of sounds. The letters and punctuation of the written language are "artificialities," Roberts tells us; they are "man-made," whereas the sounds of the language are "natural phenomena." Lloyd and Warfel make a somewhat different distinction: writing is "relatively modern and relatively crude," speech is "sophisticated and mature." Since the real language is the spoken language and the written language is only an imperfect representation of the spoken, even when the interest is in reading and composition the study of the structure of the language should begin with phonemics. Roberts tells us that linguists agree "pretty well" on the phonemic structure of contemporary English. Both Lloyd and Warfel and Roberts present the highly controversial Trager-Smith phonemics practically as gospel truth: four stresses, four pitches, four junctures, and a vowel-and-consonant analysis that makes the Kenyon and Knott *Pronouncing Dictionary of American English* unusable.

Actually the grammar taught in these two textbooks is not based in phonemics. The grammar taught is essentially that of Fries, not that of Trager and Smith (and now of Hill); and phonemics plays little part in it. Roberts makes an effort to tie punctuation to junctures, but he has to fall back on syntax constantly. Lloyd and Warfel base their treatment of punctuation almost wholly on syntax; they point out that for punctuation to give full indication of the junctures of speech would impede rapid reading. There is nothing in either textbook resembling Whitehall's "scientific" definition of the

sentence as "any stretch of utterance between breath intakes." Punctuation, Lloyd and Warfel say, has become "a minor form of art." Both textbooks use the ordinary written forms of the language, not phonemic transcriptions, in grammatical analysis. Thus in noting the use of the Latin suffix *ion* Roberts lists such forms as *recession*, *relation*, and *adhesion* in their ordinary spellings and says nothing about the complexities the spoken forms exemplify, and in noting uses of the Greek root *gon* he lists such words as *pentagon* and *trigonometry* and ignores the very different treatments of the root in the spoken language.

There is an odd romantic primitivism in New Linguist attitudes toward speech and writing. One has the feeling that only the rigorously mechanistic character of their basic dogmas restrains New Linguists from lyric pronouncements that God gave us our phonemes but the devil intruded our letters and our punctuation. The Cornelius *Language Learning* (1953)—officially distributed among teachers of English abroad as what has been called, somewhat inaccurately, an English translation of Trager and Smith's *Outline of English Structure* (1951)—shows something of the antiintellectualism to which such attitudes lead in the field of English as a second language. For Cornelius, everything is pronunciation. Any small child learns foreign languages well, but a Joseph Conrad learns them badly no matter how brilliantly he writes and—a foreign accent being of no importance in such things—no matter how brilliantly he converses. Proficiency in a foreign language depends, Cornelius says, not upon acquisition of vocabulary or upon mastery of grammar but upon "the 'way' anything that is spoken in the language is said." Cornelius labels as "superstitions" the notions that Latin is helpful in learning modern languages, that the meaning of words is important in the learning process, and

that study of grammar is useful. Grammar is treated roughly in Cornelius' pages; phonemics is for him a linguistic chiropractic that renders other approaches to language study obsolete. Mastery of foreign languages means learning to speak them as a native would. But Cornelius devotes several pages to noting one embarrassing exception to this rule. Linguists must not be expected to speak the languages they analyze. Cornelius is saddened by the plight of New Linguists who, when they proudly proclaim their profession, are confronted with the popular view that "linguists" should speak "a number of languages." A linguist is "a scientist who studies languages," a person who speaks foreign languages is only a polyglot. The "linguistic scientists" of his sect are for Cornelius a kind of supermen much like the scientists of romantic contemporary science fiction: they are far above the battle mere teachers find themselves involved in, and their "statements" must be accepted without question. Romantic primitivism and romantic scientism combine quaintly in the thinking of such New Linguists as Cornelius.

II

The phoneme is given considerable attention by Lloyd and Warfel and by Roberts, the morpheme much less. Lloyd and Warfel repeat the New Linguist doctrine that the word is a unit of the written language, and that the real, spoken language breaks up into morphemes. But they add that morphemic analysis "gets complicated in a hurry," and obviously they find the words of the written language usable for their purpose. Roberts accepts the word much as a traditionalist would, and his treatment of affixes and roots is traditionalist in type.

The truth is that we learn such words as *thermometer*, *trigonometry*, *confess*, *survive*, and *deliberate* as units and division of them into morphemes is a

highly sophisticated process. Trager and Smith divide the personal-pronoun form *I* into a base /a/—phonemically—and an inflectional ending /y/. In his *Introduction to Linguistic Structures* (1958) Hill divides *svelte* and *potato* into the prefixes *s* and *po* and the bases *velte* and *tato*. Hill proceeds on a strictly phonological basis, ignoring both meaning and history. Presumably he would divide *trigonometry* into *trigo* and *nometry*. Hockett takes meaning into account in morphemic analysis in his *Course in Modern Linguistics* (1958); but he finds relations to meaning "tenuous" in such words as *remote*, *promote*, *reduce*, and *produce* and concludes that "an obvious practical step is to set the morphemic problem aside." Harris makes grammar into a kind of algebra. In an important article in *Language* (1957) he describes the *do* of *do they paint?* as a nonmorphemic carrier of a zero morpheme which has the *s* of *paints* as an alternant.

The traditionalist accepts the word as the basic unit for syntax. It does not disturb him greatly that his words are sometimes no more than "graphic accidents": language is full of accidents, and for literate users of language oral accidents are not uniquely significant. The traditionalist takes history into account in doing morphological analysis of such complexes as *deliberate* and *produce* and *trigonometry* (and even *trig*) and in refusing to attempt morphological division of such words as *potato* and *I*. To the traditionalist, some of the morphemes the New Linguists come up with look like what the Father of Jabberwocky Linguistics, in a historic warning to eager morpheme hunters, called "boojums."

III

The syntax of Lloyd and Warfel's and Roberts' textbooks is indefensible at many points. Both books follow the Fries *Structure of English* (1952) in setting up a shapeless category of what Fries

calls "function words" outside their four parts of speech. Function words are supposed to have syntactic value primarily, other words to have lexical value primarily. There is space here to comment on only the first subcategory among the Fries function words. Determinative modifiers of noun heads are classified as function words, other modifiers of noun heads are not. Thus for Fries in *each foreign student* the modifier *foreign* is an adjective ("class 3 word") but the modifier *each* is a function word, and in *a state university* the modifier *state* is a noun ("class 1 word") but the modifier *a* is a function word. For Fries *that* is a function word in *who's that girls?* Fries calls *that* a noun in *that far* and apparently would do so in *who's that?* His subcategory of determiners is supposed to be a small one and closed; this is true of all the subcategories of function words, more or less. Fries lists one nonpronominal possessive among his determiners: *John's*. If *John's* is included, other nonpronominal possessives must be included, among them great numbers of phrasal items such as *my father and mother's*. The subcategory is then an open one. And is *John's* a function word in *that's John's book* but a noun in *that book is John's*? And what about the lexical (and proper-name) value of such words? Actually even such determiners as *that* and *each* and *a* have their full share of lexical value, as a glance at any dictionary makes clear. Lloyd and Warfel and Roberts avoid nonpronominal possessive determiners, but in doing so they are guilty of evasive syntax, since *John's book* is determined like *his book* and *that book*, and *new book* is not. Hill calls the possessives of nouns their "determinative" forms. The truth is that Fries' category of function words is both unmanageable and useless.

Lloyd and Warfel and Roberts are guilty of bad syntax of other kinds too. A few examples will have to be repre-

sentative. We cannot accept Lloyd and Warfel's view that "selection proceeds in the order of utterance," and that consequently in *bang goes the bell* the verb form *goes* selects the singular subject *the bell*. This is like saying of *in his later plays Shakespeare used less rhyme* that the pronoun *his*, coming first, selects *Shakespeare*; it is carrying New Linguist distaste for "mentalism" pretty far. We cannot accept Lloyd and Warfel's distinction between complements and noncomplementary adverbial modifiers in such sentences as *we are done now*, in which *now* is classified as a complement, and *nevertheless the boy still loved the girl dearly*, in which *nevertheless*, *still*, and *dearly* are denied complement status. We cannot accept Roberts' classification of *wanted* in *wanted to go* as a modifier of what follows it. In its major components he *wanted to go to Puerto Rico* is syntactically like *he wanted a trip to Puerto Rico* and, with prepositional complement, *he hoped for a trip to Puerto Rico*. We cannot accept Roberts' procedure in immediate-constituent analysis. *Usually* modifies the rest of the sentence in *the boys usually answered rudely* as truly as in *usually the boys answered rudely*, and *three* modifies the following phrasal unit in *three students from Mexico* as truly as in *three Mexican students*. Finally, in repeating the New Linguist doctrine that form determines meaning, not meaning form, Roberts is guilty of teaching a quarter truth. I quote:

The structure produces the meaning, not the other way around. We do not, in our use of language, perceive that a word names a person, place, or thing and therefore occurs in a noun pattern. We perceive that it occurs in a noun pattern and therefore names a person, place, or thing.

Let us suppose that the name *dammitol*—thus far rejected by the manufacturers—is given to a new tranquilizer. Its internal form will not determine how the

word is used in sentences. *Dammitol* will be a quantifiable noun, simply because it names what can be loosely described as a "substance": it will be normal to say *I'm taking too much dammitol*. If the word is also applied to the pills in which the new tranquilizer is sold, it will become a pluralizer noun also: *I had to take nine dammitols to get through that book*. If the word is extended to the action of taking the tranquilizer, it will probably become a verb also: *I'm dammitolling steadily now*. Form will be following meaning in all these uses. Meaning underlies grammar much as phonetics underlies phonemics: grammar requires a certain autonomy but can never achieve complete independence. The quarter truth in Roberts' remarks lies in the fact that when a person who does not know the word *dammitol* encounters it in such a sentence as *I'm taking too much dammitol*, the context will enable him to make a good guess about it.

IV

What it adds up to is that the grammar Lloyd and Warfel and Roberts give at great length—at greater length than seems desirable for Freshman English—is about as vulnerable as the school grammar these men scorn. It is *not* the best grammar available now. Yet a crusade in support of their kind of analysis is in process. Our journals print many fervent pleas for the New Linguistics, our meetings echo with the testimonials of the converted. The new faith is to be preached on every street corner, to captive audiences. In the January *College English* Professor Simonini tells us that every English major should have two advanced courses in the New Linguistics. Phonemics must be taught, and—Professor Simonini is explicit—the Fries grammar. From freshman year to graduate school, the New Linguists want their material both taught and required. Cru-

saders are rarely noted for broad-mindedness. "Where courses in traditional grammar are being taught, a new system based on the latest research would have to be substituted," Professor Simonini warns us.

Let us hope that Simonini, Lloyd and Warfel, and Roberts are keeping up with their homework. It is no longer 1952. If we are to teach "a new system based on the latest research" we may have to teach not Fries but Harris and Chomsky, or Hill, and we had better read Bolinger with great care. In the end we will find that the best "new system" is reshaped traditionalist grammar in which the work of such men as Palmer and Poutsma, Sapir and Bloomfield, and Harris and Bolinger is taken into account. Such a grammar should be taught at advanced levels in college and university English departments everywhere. Serious students with academic specializations of many kinds would enroll in the courses. In the face of attractive and varied competition, traditionalist senior grammar at the University of Texas enrolled 152 students in the last nine-month session. Monopolistic requirements are undesirable: the structure of modern English is very complex, and approaches of several kinds are valid. Courses in the history of the language and in Anglo-Saxon deserve the fullest support short of flat requirement. On the other hand, it is clear that more specialists in English language should acquire the solid training in physics that laboratory phonetics requires. Pitch, stress, and juncture can be observed in the laboratory, as Bolinger has been reminding us.

Perhaps it is more than wishful thinking to believe that English-department interest in a defensible grammar would even bring about improvement of the grammar now being taught in the schools and in college Freshman English. Cer-

tainly English-department aloofness is at present harmful to the school grammar as well as to the English departments. In any case, traditionalist grammar is not likely to die. Traditionalist

grammarians will continue to die, and their funerals will continue to be noted with varied emotions. It is unlikely that the New Linguists have really achieved immortality.

An Experiment in Accelerating the Vocabulary Growth of Remedial Students

RICHARD BRADDOCK and SIDNEY KRAUS¹

The infant delights his parents with his first word. They recognize that his mental power develops as he adds to his stock of words. Later, his teachers are pleased if they discover that he uses the proper terminology. His English teachers feel confident that he understands something about literature if he can use "romanticism" meaningfully and distinguish among "satire," "irony," and "sarcasm."

Common sense tells us that vocabulary is the raw material of that all-important dyad, thought and communication. We nurture vocabulary development in the parenthetical definitions, footnotes, and glossaries of our textbooks; we measure it when we test reading skill, knowledge, and even mental ability. In short, we believe that vocabulary is both the germ and food of all intellectual activity. It makes sense, then, that we discover how we can best stimulate the development of the vocabularies of our students.

I. Previous Studies

Although a concern with vocabulary runs through many studies, we find a few controlled studies directly concerned with the development of vocabulary at the college level. Two decades ago, Irving H. Anderson and Grant Fairbanks described their study of "Common and Differential Factors in Reading Vocabulary

and Hearing Vocabulary."² From administering a vocabulary test both in oral and written form to 220 freshmen at the State University of Iowa, they concluded, among other things, that vocabulary ability is "a centrally determined function" acquired independently of the mode of presentation.

Several years later, Harold W. Bernard reported "An Experiment in Vocabulary Building"³ which he conducted at the University of Oregon among some 90 students having scholastic difficulties. He concluded that a student's vocabulary grows whether or not he gives the matter much attention, but that growth may come about twice as fast if he gives it specific attention. Bernard found "measurable" gains in vocabulary in as short a period as six weeks. Glen W. Blair conducted an experiment⁴ similar to Bernard's, each using a "student list" technique—having their students keep notebooks of unfamiliar words discovered in their reading. But Blair's subjects were 101 juniors and seniors—evidently with satisfactory scholastic records—who

²Irving H. Anderson and Grant Fairbanks, "Common and Differential Factors in Reading Vocabulary and Hearing Vocabulary," *Journal of Educational Research*, XXX (1937), 317-324.

³Harold W. Bernard, "An Experiment in Vocabulary Building," *School and Society*, LIII (1941), 742-743.

⁴Glenn W. Blair, "An Experiment in Vocabulary Building," *Journal of Higher Education*, XII (1941), 99-101.

¹Both of the State University of Iowa.

gained over four times as much as a matched group of 101 other juniors and seniors taking the same courses.

II. Subjects

Our recent experiment in vocabulary development at the State University of Iowa stemmed from our desire to help entering freshmen in communication skills whose placement test scores put them in the lowest decile. These students are enrolled in 10:7, a four-hour course (earning two semester hours of credit) which they take concurrently with the first of the two regular four-hour courses—10:1 and 10:2. The 10:7 course gives supplementary practice in writing, reading, speaking, and listening, in that order of emphasis. We have known that 10:7 students are woefully weak in vocabulary, that they are especially handicapped in the freshman courses with heavy loads in reading.

Our experiment originally set out to test whether or not supplementary study of vocabulary would significantly accelerate growth in vocabulary of the 10:7 students. We originally felt that there would be two difficulties in using with these students the "student list" technique of Bernard and of Blair: (1) The students might tend mostly to list the specialized terms which their other instructors usually help them with anyway; we felt that we should give them help with general vocabulary. (2) Often having poor study habits, the students might tend to postpone or fake personal lists; we felt that they needed some more frequent check of their endeavors than would be afforded by having their lists looked over once or twice a semester.

III. Procedure

The first procedure we used, during the fall semester of 1956, was as follows: We obtained in advance the assignments in the basic textbooks used in three of the courses taken by many first semester

freshmen—Earth Science 11:23, Social Science 11:11, and Western Civilization 11:31.⁵ Every Thursday we gave each 10:7 student a mimeographed sheet with twenty words drawn from the next week's reading assignments for each course, about seven words from each of the texts. We did not select technical words like "foliation," "ethnocentrism," and "Reformation," but more general words like "abrasion," "integral," and "emissaries." In choosing words for study, we used as a guide Edward L. Thorndike and Irving Lorge's *Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words*,⁶ almost always restricting our choices to words which, although common enough to be listed in the *Word Book*, had an occurrence of ten times or fewer per million words. (We found in a pilot experiment during the previous spring that words occurring more frequently than ten times per million tended to be too familiar.)

Each of the twenty words was presented in the context of the sentence in which it occurred in the text. Frequently, when we distributed the vocabulary sheets, we showed how to get at the meanings of certain words by analyzing the base words, prefixes, and suffixes. Most of the words, however, the student was expected to look up for himself. On the following Tuesday, we administered a multiple-choice quiz over ten of the twenty items originally assigned. At midsemester and again at the end of the semester, we gave review tests over a sampling of all words studied. In both the weekly quizzes and the review tests,⁷ we tried to get away from merely selecting a synonym from the

⁵Eloise Snavelly, of the State University of Iowa, assisted with this phase of the experiment.

⁶Edward L. Thorndike and Irving Lorge, *Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words*, New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1944.

⁷Both types of tests are available from Richard Braddock.

dictionary for the correct answer and we tried, where possible, to include as wrong answers other meanings of the word than the one intended in the context. Here is an example of such a question:

To ward off the danger of a council under secular auspices, the pope himself assembled the Fifth Lateran Council at Rome in 1512.

a. opposition b. sponsorship c. omens
d. threats

Thus "omens" would be incorrect although it is one of the synonyms the dictionary gives for "auspices," and "sponsorship" would be correct even though the dictionary offers "patronage" and "protection" for the meaning in the sentence above. In many of the items, we were not able to keep correct answers from being the synonyms given in the dictionary. But the tests were discriminating; the reliability of our weekly quizzes taken together was .92. We might add that the assignment sheets and the quizzes are time-consuming to prepare, that a change in textbooks or in assignments in the other courses calls for a reworking of the material used in the previous semester.

To test the results of our experiment, we compared the placement and final vocabulary test scores of the experimental group (students taking 10:7 in fall, 1956) to the scores of a control group (students who took 10:7 in fall, 1955, and who had no such regular vocabulary work). In each case, the placement test was administered before the students began their regular class work in the fall, the final test at the end of the spring semester—a full semester after the students had taken the supplementary course. We used as both placement and final test the General Vocabulary Test (Form B) constructed by our own University Examination Service and having a reliability of .95. We were chagrined to find no apparent difference between the

vocabulary learning of our experimental and control groups.

As a consequence, we thought that our weekly instructor-prepared list and quiz technique may have been too mechanical. We decided to use during the fall semester of 1957 a "student list" technique similar to that used by Bernard and by Blair. We had the students keep in their notebooks a list of unfamiliar words which they found in their reading. The students not only listed each word but along with it gave the sentence in which it was found and the meaning of the word in that context. Every month the students submitted their notebooks to the instructor for a grade. As might be expected, there was a wide range in the number of words each student listed during the semester—the longest list consisting of 181 words, the shortest of no words, the mean length being 48.4 words. After these students completed the final vocabulary test at the close of the spring semester, we compared their test results with those of the students of the previous two years. Table I shows the experimental design employed.

TABLE I
EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

n	Control	Instructors	Students
		List	List
Subjects	98	108	87
Instructors	7	8	10
Sections	10	11	11

IV. Results

We subjected our data to a simple analysis of variance⁸ which yielded an F value of 1.91. This value is not statistically significant at the 5% level ($df=2,290$). Table II shows a summary of the data. The analysis indicates that neither of the techniques used to accelerate vocabulary growth is superior to a

⁸See E. F. Lindquist, *Design and Analysis of Experiments*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956, 47-100.

TABLE II
SUMMARY TABLE
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Source	df	ss	ms
Treatments	2	207.51	103.76
Within Groups	290	15743.91	54.29
Total	292	15951.42	

lack of supplementary work. However, we might point out the following limitations which should be considered in weighing the results of this experiment: (1) The final vocabulary test was administered a full semester *after* the completion of the 10:7 courses. Further, this test was a general vocabulary test, not a test of the specific words studied. (2) Although the instructors were given explicit directions in both experimental groups, possible differences in personality or administration of classes may have been an unobserved variable.

V. Summary and Conclusion

As we compare our "instructor list" and "student list" results with those of Bernard and of Blair, we note that we probably had the weakest students as well as no acceleration of vocabulary learning. Bernard's students were all having scholastic difficulties, but, being mostly sophomores and above, probably were not as weak academically as ours. His experimental group developed vocabulary about twice as fast as his control group. Blair's students, juniors and seniors presumably not having any more scholastic difficulties than average for juniors and seniors, doubtless were stronger academically than Bernard's

or ours. Bernard's experimental group gained over four times as much as his control group. Thus, if these three experiments are comparable, it seems clear that acceleration in vocabulary development is associated with general academic strength. If we accept Anderson and Fairbanks' conclusion that vocabulary ability is "a centrally determined function" acquired independently of the mode of presentation, then we may conclude that acceleration in vocabulary development is dependent upon mental ability; the more intelligent the student, the more his vocabulary development can be accelerated; the less intelligent the student, the less his vocabulary development can be accelerated.

If the vocabulary growth of our remedial college students cannot be accelerated by *any* special study, then special vocabulary study is wasted on the lowest ten percent or so of entering freshmen in colleges with unselective admission policies, and probably on the lower fifty percent or so of the pupils in an average secondary school class. Further investigation of this hypothesis should be conducted at both the college and secondary school levels. We may well ask ourselves in which of the various communication skills we can help remedial students accelerate their learning through supplementary measures and in which skills we cannot force remedial students beyond some "natural" rate of growth. Certainly it is a waste of valuable time and effort giving to remedial students special attention from which they cannot profit.

Acquiring Helpful Attitudes Toward Writing¹

HARRY R. WARFEL²

No human being wants to be shut out of language. Some inner drive as strong as the life force itself impels human beings to develop and maintain the power of speech. From childhood to old age each one of us seeks opportunity to participate in speech activities. No loss is deemed greater than the loss of power to utter our thoughts.

Despite a child's ability by the age of six to push his parents literally into a corner with his language skill, something goes wrong when the bridge is crossed to writing. Although writing must be a later development than speech, the neural, muscular, and mental paths are not more difficult to traverse in writing than in speech. The eye is as quick as the ear, and the fingers are as dextrous as the tongue. A person's failure to acquire competence in writing must be traced to its source. This source is not in the intellect or in the nervous system or in the muscular system. The source of a lack of skill lies in the inadequate practice of writing by the student.

A child learns speech by imitating his elders. He knows and can pronounce only as many sounds, structures, and words as he has heard. If a *d* or *s* always appears where the standard form is *th*, he will never use the *th* but say *dese*, *dose*, *dem* or *Roos* or *Essel* for Ruth or Ethel. If *is* is the form he hears with *I*, *you*, and *they*, as well as with *he*, *she*, and *it* and with nouns as subjects, he will not know *you are* or *they are*. Merely telling a student to read a handbook will be almost useless; the standard forms will seem natural to him only if sufficient repetition overrides the old habit.

If a command has never been given to him, he will not know the command pattern. If a family group uses few words and never reads to the child, his vocabulary will be limited. The reverse is true, too. Much varied talk to a child leads to a wider command of the spoken language.

Writing is also learned by imitation. But there are intermediate steps between speaking and writing. Writing uses tools. The child can't begin unless he has the tools and a place where he can sit to use them. He must be allowed freedom to occupy the necessary space and to employ the necessary time. He must be encouraged and assisted in writing just as he was in learning to speak. The fact is that these physical conditions and parental attitudes are not available to all children or even to half the children in public schools.

For most children the writing process is wholly a school activity. No letters or other writing is completed at home where the child can see and imitate the parents. The child is given no reason for, and no example of, concentrated writing effort paralleling speech activity. He comes to and stays in school with the erroneous notion that writing is not central to life. At best it has validity for him only in the school program.

Writing is not in its muscular activity a language process at all. It is a form of drawing. A too early requirement of handwriting gives a false view to the child. A child should not begin writing until he has mastered the pencil as an instrument of drawing, has perfected the skill of forming small loops and other marks needed in writing, and knows how to put similar forms on a line from left to right. The age of seven or eight is

¹Presented at a meeting of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association, November 30, 1957.

²University of Florida

early enough for the beginning of writing. The new TV star and companion of Lassie, Jon Provost, at the age of seven was not able to read and write. When writing is assigned too early, a distaste for it is often generated.

A child's eyes should be filled with print before writing starts. Not until he has fair competence in reading should he be asked to write. Just as speech and reading must go together at the beginning, so, later, reading and writing must be united. Until a child has an awareness of the patterns of print, he cannot visualize the patterns of writing. An intermediate step is necessary between print and writing. Conventional print is in one form—called Roman—and writing requires a translation into script. Both the capitals and the lower-case letters differ in the two systems of notation. This process of translating Roman letters—into script is not a language act; it is, I repeat, an act of drawing. Only as language is seen as separate from drawing can a teacher have a right attitude toward the child's task.

A high standard of competence in penmanship is often deemed a high standard of language competence. This emphasis on drawing ability is often mistaken for an emphasis on language. Actually the ability to write a beautiful script has as little to do with a command of writing skill as a capacity to play a piano has to the power of original musical composition. There can be a correlation, but in fact there is very little in the run of ordinary mankind. Beautiful handwriting or great skill in musical performance is not a necessary prerequisite to creativity. Other qualities are needed by an author or a composer. The serious suggestion that children use typewriters instead of pencils tacitly recognizes the non-language act in handwriting.

A child needs to feel at home in language—in speech and in print—if he is

to do well in writing. Just as he can't play baseball well if he hasn't watched and played in practice games, so he can't write well until his familiarity is so great that the action of writing seems natural and desirable to him. I repeat the injunction, therefore, that the child should speak and read much before he is set to work with a pencil.

When he does write too soon, he makes spelling errors. Spelling also is not basically a language activity. It, too, belongs to drawing. Until the child's eyes see often the "words" it speaks, the translation of sounds into words should not be attempted. For this reason all writing in the initial stages should be copying. This imitation, since it involves a good deal of script for Roman type and a necessary relationship of eye perception to ear perceptions, is a complicated task for a child. The mere copying without a projection of the words into sound is unwise. Unless the child is aware of the basis in speech of the writing, the exercise incompletely fulfills its purpose. Correctness in spelling is a comparatively unsatisfactory goal when word and sound are kept separate.

An emphasis upon spelling has a further weakness in the language program. The greatest error of teachers is the assumption that vocabulary makes a language. Language is a system. The 300 little language words—determiners, prepositions, clause markers, auxiliary verbs, etc.—are more important than the big words. The little words are the gears and cams in the machinery. The right use of them is far more important than the correct spelling of big, occasionally used words.

In the early school program, children write brief stories, poems, plays, and essays without perceiving any unnaturalness in the task. They exhibit no inhibitions. Somewhere along the way, usually early in the teens, students pick up the

notion that writing is literature and that literature is produced by geniuses. Teachers who do not write tend to reinforce this notion. Instead of writing easily and naturally, many children simply try not to write at all. The greatest crime committed against a third-grade child is to send him on an errand because he cannot read. The greatest crime committed against a teenager is to make him a traffic cop during the writing period because he can't write. The greatest crime is committed against college freshmen when we say, "Talk to them for a half hour; then they won't write so much."

High schools, by stressing literature in English classes and subject matter in other classes rather than an oral and written expression of that subject matter, advance the job of alienating students from writing. Objective tests complete that job by shutting students out of writing practice. As a result of the situations at home and in the school, our students come to college with a capacity to write but with inadequate experience in writing.

The problem we face as college teachers is not nearly so difficult as we make it. Generally speaking, we need to change our attitudes before we can hope to create better attitudes in our students. We must drop the idea that students are "dumb" or stupid. The fact is that even mongoloids manage to make themselves intelligible in speech. No other ability is so pronounced in human kind as that of speech. The crossover into writing is not difficult, but somewhere along the line the students simply have not had the amount of experience necessary to keep them abreast of their age level and their duties. Inexperience is correctible. If writing teachers will set free their students in as pleasant and free a situation as the gymnasium teachers afford, the writing will be as good as the foot-

ball or baseball. We don't expect these youngsters to play on the Yankees or even on the school varsity. Students in writing should not be expected to sell their stuff to *The Saturday Evening Post*. When teachers succeed in placing their writings in the better magazines, they can nag their students with some conscience.

Students welcome the opportunity to learn about language. But they become frustrated when their time is spent with workbooks, with the memorization of meaningless grammatical terms, with quibbles over usage, with assignments of polysyllabic words they may never meet again, and with "hard" reading. The students desire to enter into their heritage of language; they want to use it expertly and not merely talk about it. This expertness comes, as does proficiency in baseball, with practice, lots of free and joyous practice. This practice must be in the areas where they need to improve their skills.

The practice must begin, especially with college students who have been shut out of their heritage, with imitation. The patterns must be displayed for them and they should fill patterns. At first they can practice the various structures associated with the noun. They can practice substituting prepositional phrases and clauses for adjectives, using adjectives appositively after the noun, and so on. Then they can move to the play of the free-wheeling adverb in the sentence. Many students need guidance in putting an adverbial clause or prepositional phrase first in a sentence. Finally can come the substitution of clauses, phrases, and verbals in the noun, adverb, and adjective functions. Our textbooks seldom take up the verbals except to discuss dangling participles. Instead of enlarging the command of students over the patterns of language, such books repress an imaginative free play with language.

After the major patterns have been practiced, larger forms can be imitated. The paragraph ceases to be a bugbear when this approach is used. And soon a student can develop topic sentences of his own into meaningful discourse. In this process there ought to be much advice but very little correction. Teachers seem to think that every piece of student writing is to be chiseled into marble and to remain as a motto to succeeding ages. Actually more than 99 percent of student writing is doomed to be put in the waste basket where it belongs. A teacher's treatment of practice writing as if it were to be published in *The Atlantic Monthly* is a waste of time. The free play on the athletic field is not caught in cameras for eternity; only the varsity games are televised and photographed. The analogy is a good one. Only a few set pieces for grade purposes should get a detailed reading and correction.

There should be no grades on college themes for the first six or eight weeks. After the student has had a chance to make up for lost time, it is fair to grade him. Until an effort has been made to bring him to his age level, grades tend to be repressive and discouraging. When we complain that our students are not well prepared, we are wasting our time. We ought to be of the opinion that our job is to take them where they are and to bring them to competence. If we assume that they can't come up to the

mark, we are looking at present status and not at the unused power of the students. A student can do no better than his best. His best is exactly the sum total of his past competence. If he has never reached competence, it can be given to him in a few weeks or months. We must take the attitude that our job is to bring students into their heritage. Only when we do so, are we doing our job.

Students are often indifferent or even hostile when they meet the old tone of disparagement and elegant teacher superiority. They say, "Show me." Unless we do show them the simple steps to full literacy, they may acquire politeness but they won't have respect for us. They listen to their elders—juniors and seniors—who advise them to cling to the rocking boat and await a master pilot in a major field of study. An English teacher who takes his students into reading and writing literacy, as Copey did at Harvard, will earn an undying gratitude.

No student wants to be shut out of language. Rather, he wants to gain mastery. But he cannot gain mastery unless his teachers provide the opportunity, the right conditions, and the right attitudes. The teacher has the responsibility to develop proper attitudes toward his students. The student is eager to follow affirmative leadership. After that he will feel contentment and enjoy success in writing.

National Standards¹

H. J. SACHS²

The chief task assigned to me is to lay a background for the specific recommendations to be made by the other speakers on this panel. For the most part I shall be summarizing some conclusions reached at workshops in CCCC conferences in recent years.

During the last year our committee³ has been notified, and, by implication, *warned*, that in attempting to establish national standards for a small group of courses we are undertaking something extremely difficult and something unprecedented. We recognize the difficulties, but we are convinced that the courses taught in Freshman English are the most important courses taught in college, and we believe that national standards will help us to teach them more effectively.

I am forced to begin by disagreeing with parts of an eloquent and witty speech which we all heard yesterday.⁴ My comments are not gratuitous animadversions. We were told that all departments should teach composition and that English teachers should stop worrying about themes. Certainly we are eager for all departments to stress good composition, but some teachers in other departments will refuse to accept the responsibility; most teachers in other departments are far less capable of teaching composition than we are; and those subjects which are supposed to be everyone's responsibility tend to become no one's responsibility.

There is no statistical evidence, we were informed, that writing twenty themes is more helpful than writing ten.

If we reduce themes from twenty to ten, why not from ten to five, and down to zero? By the same reasoning we could reduce the number of novels or short stories or poems our students read from twenty to ten to five and to zero.

It may be true, as we were told, that Gresham's law is no more important than Grimm's law. It definitely is not true that tables of phonetic sounds are as important as tables of chemical values. Atomic powers may create a new world or destroy all human life. I see no such dramatic possibilities in phonetics.

No, if the chief approach to Freshman English is through a narrow, scholastic study of linguistics or through abstract theories of rhetoric, then ours is not a subject of extraordinary importance.

What *does* make our subject invaluable?

We could justify the tremendous importance we attach to Freshman English by the unanimous testimony of all professional associations, from accountants to zoologists, that the men and women who speak and write with efficiency are the ones who make the most money. But English as the road to wealth is not our theme, and in any case, the approach is not congenial to impecunious pedagogues.

We could argue for the supreme importance of Freshman English because of the numbers of teachers and students involved. In most colleges and universities the English Department is by far the largest department, and most of the work of the department is teaching freshmen. At my school, Louisiana Tech, 61% of the students in English classes last fall were in Freshman English, and 21% were in sophomore classes. The studies made by Professor Rice of Michigan and Professor Foster of Georgia Tech indi-

¹Condensation of a paper presented in the CCCC meeting, Benjamin Franklin Hotel, Philadelphia, March 28, 1958.

²Louisiana Polytechnic Institute

³CCCC Committee on National Standards and National Accreditation

⁴See below, pp. 231-235.

cate that the situation at Louisiana Tech is fairly typical. At Louisiana State University last fall, 65% of the undergraduates in English were in freshman courses and 29% were in sophomore classes. But we do not find our chief argument in numbers.

We base our claim on two points that are too obvious to need elaborate exposition. First, skill in language, the basic goal in Freshman English, is pre-eminent in any list of desiderata for the college student. Second, English is the only subject of broad cultural opportunities which is required of all college students.

* * * *

Our committee does not wish to prescribe syllabi or detailed procedures, but we *do* wish to prescribe small classes taught by adequately prepared instructors. We believe that these instructors should do the lecturing, should lead the discussions, should spend time with students in conferences, and should themselves grade the themes they assign. We believe that students should read a great deal, both in established masterpieces and in current materials of significance. We insist that students should write a great deal, and that they should write about important things. We *do* believe that Freshman English and junior college English can improve a student's skill in writing and speech, can help him to think logically, can give him greater self-understanding, can acquaint him with great ideas and ideals, and can thus offer a wonderful introduction to a liberal education.

* * * *

What are the chief factors at the college level which handicap our work? We have heard them discussed often, and we may list some of them briefly.

First, classes that are too large and that are growing larger.

Second, the resulting tendency to reduce the required amount of writing.

Third, the growing custom of hiring housewives and other nonprofessional persons to grade our themes.

Fourth, the excessive use of graduate students as instructors in Freshman English. Formerly, we at least limited such instructors to those who had the M. A. Today we see an increasing number of B. A.'s who in a single semester are teaching, taking graduate courses, and writing a thesis. Is the next step to have college freshmen taught by college juniors and seniors?

Fifth, the refusal to give adequate pay and adequate rank to good teachers of composition, and the practice of finding the best teachers of Freshman English and removing them completely from the course.

Sixth, the refusal to give adequate recognition for research in teaching problems. We may include here the assumption in our graduate programs that the chief occupation of the holder of the Ph. D. will be literary research, rather than teaching.

Seventh, the bewildering proliferation of exotic and esoteric approaches to our subject.

Eighth, and basic to all, the feeling of so many administrators and department heads, that Freshman English is, as it was ironically described in yesterday's meetings, a "necessary evil" and "the measles of apprenticeship." Because of this attitude, deans and presidents welcome statistical "proof" that it is cheaper and more effective to teach fifty or a hundred students at a time in a composition class than it is to teach twenty. These statisticians! Why they delay so long in "proving" that grade-school graduates are as well educated as college graduates I do not understand.

Television is becoming the most popular solution to the problem of numbers, and I am convinced that in many fields of education it offers great opportunities. But its use in composition classes is om-

inous, devastating. We live in an age of faceless men and women. I wonder whether 1984 should not have been entitled 1974 or even 1964. In small classes in English we can have give and take, question and answer; reading and writing assignments planned for the specific class and the specific student; encouragement of Emersonian non-conformity; the challenge of conflicting views on vital, controversial subjects; friendship and warmth and the priceless values possible from personal relationships between scholar and student. In television we shall sacrifice all these and more, even if the performer is a scholar and a fluent actor, though as often as not he may be or may become chiefly an actor.

These handicaps I have described arise in large part from the conception of Freshman English as a necessary evil and from the belief that our only "real" work is in research or in working with our English majors.

But our *non-majors* are usually the ones who become our governors, our senators, our chairmen of corporations and our cabinet members, and our presidents. What do they read? How do they think? And that question means, how do they speak and write? We have greater opportunities to help these future makers and breakers of civilizations than any other department does. It is time that we demand the most favorable circumstances for doing a good job.

News Reporting by Pictures¹

JOE MICHAELS²

When the broadcasting industry was born, nobody had much of an idea as to what could be done with it. Well, they played music and gave talks and then it occurred to broadcasters that one of the things you could do was to tell people what was happening in their own communities and in the world at large. The beginning of radio news was really just as simple as that. The complications came later.

The years passed and the clever toy of the twenties became a major industry of the thirties. News in radio grew with the business but it took World War II to truly put it into stride. Up to that time the custom generally was to have an announcer reading some pre-digested

wire copy. Now, with a quickening of the public's interest in the events of the moment, networks and stations started to truly create news organizations of their own. The man who had bought a station with which he hoped to make a little money suddenly found himself acting the role of publisher and being reminded of his community responsibilities. It was pretty confusing, but there was worse to come.

Hard upon the end of the War, commercial television arrived and the newsmen were immediately champing at the bit. The possibilities of what could be done when you had both voice *and* pictures at your disposal really staggered the imagination.

At first we just took the old-fashioned radio newscast and put in film clips wherever they seemed appropriate, and

¹Slightly edited version of a talk presented in Panel III, CCCC meeting in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin Hotel, March 27, 1958.

²Reporter, NBC News program *Today*

in some places where they undoubtedly were not. But everyone was reaching out for something new. I hope you won't think it too immodest if I insist that the first truly new concept in the area of what Pat Weaver liked to call "The Real World" was "Today," the program which is my working address. Of course, there was much more. People experimented with various techniques. The documentary became a part of television broadcasting. Ed Murrow and his "See It Now" programs became a vital force, not only in the industry but in our national life. Panel programs sprang up in every nook and cranny like spring flowers and people became accustomed to seeing the remarks of politicians on such programs filling the front pages of their Monday morning newspapers.

The new tool was dynamic and the politicians were among the first to recognize this. So, one day everyone suddenly became aware of the fact that television news, in all its various forms, had become a power in the nation.

Broadcast news was never born, it just sort of happened. We started doing it first and then we began to learn how to do it. To be strictly accurate, we are learning still. Nor should this come as a surprise. Experts differ, but nobody can deny that the communication of news by the printed word is at least several hundred years old. But the broadcasting of news by voice goes back only about three decades, by voice and picture, only one.

Our little Gargantua is barely in his adolescence, but like his literary predecessor at the same age even now he barely knows his own strength.

It took Orson Welles and his science-fiction piece on Mars and Martian invaders from space to teach us what radio can do. Add all the vast range of picture possibilities to this and you begin to get

some idea of what television could create.

This much we knew at the beginning, but only in theory. It was in the development of the techniques and the public reaction to them that we really discovered that the broadcasting of television news presented us not only with rare opportunities, but with problems, too.

Not the least of these are objectivity and responsibility. Like God, everybody is for them, all right. The thing is, how do you get to achieve them?

There probably has never been a medium in which the temptation to editorialize, to be subjective, is so great. Consider what we deal with. A newsman, almost by definition, is an individual highly interested in the world about him and the events which transpire in it. This being so, for him to feel objective implies almost a contradiction in terms. For to be truly objective in feeling you must first be indifferent, and if you're indifferent you just aren't a good newsman.

And it's so easy to do, this business of slanting the news. You don't even have to write into your text, you can do it by inflection alone. For instance, the copy says, "President Eisenhower left this morning for another weekend of golf in Augusta, Georgia."

Innocent enough in print or if read carefully.

But suppose our newscaster is of a somewhat different political persuasion and reads the line this way, "President Eisenhower left this morning for *another* weekend of golf in Augusta, Georgia."

Add to that, if our boy has a touch of **ham in him**, a slight pause, and a significantly raised eyebrow, and you have a minor masterpiece of editorial slanting.

It's that easy and can be done even more subtly. It's so easy, in fact, that

where people of strong beliefs are involved—and most of us have such beliefs—not succumbing to the temptation represents quite a feat.

There are so many ways it can be done, ways the broadcaster himself may be unaware of, even while doing them. In my own case, for example, recently a friend told me that he could always tell when I was interviewing someone I didn't like or with whom I heartily disagreed. I challenged this pretty hotly. I've always taken pride in the objectivity of my work and I told him I just didn't believe it. He said he was sorry but it was true and he could prove it. When I asked how, he said, "Every time you interview someone you don't like, you light a cigarette and start blowing smoke around and waving it in the air all the time the man is talking."

Well, I still didn't believe it but, just to be sure, I checked back on a few such interviews—and in my time I've done more than a few with people who aroused in my bosom scant enthusiasm—and, sure enough, there I was—smoking and blowing and waving that little, white cylinder around. So, if by some chance you should see me on an interview one of these days and should you be kind enough not to switch to another channel, if you suddenly get the distinct impression that I am sitting on my hands you will know that, once again, this reporter is putting Satan behind him.

Such incidents are amusing but the point is that they're really important. If you want to know why, just drop into a motion picture house and watch the audience respond to a Grade B tearjerker. The picture may have been designed for a twelve-year-old mind, the actors may be incompetents, and the writing juvenile. But you'll see people crying, some of them people who are well aware of just how poor the film really is.

What does it prove? It proves that, with pictures and sound, you can influence people's emotions with almost alarming ease. You can make them cry, you can make them laugh, not only with people, but at them. You can make them mad, and—if your pictures are powerful enough—you can even make them hate.

And that's what we deal with, movies—but movies involving real people and real events, and our power is even greater, for whereas the vast multitude of people went to theaters at most a couple of times a week, television lives at home with them and they spend hour upon hour with it.

The power of this medium is great because of the emotional impact it can engender. If you still don't believe it, I'd like you to see a piece of film which I think provides a fair demonstration.

(A roll film was shown dealing with recent riots by Fascist elements in Italy.)³

I call this a fair example because with sound, with the proper music and narration the impact would be even greater than you saw. Compare this with a written news account which merely states that a Fascist rally took place in Rome, that Communist elements tried to break it up, and that some blows were struck and some heads bloodied on both sides, and you get some idea of what I mean. With such power comes added journalistic responsibility.

A few minutes ago, I offered some examples of how simple it is to slant the news. There are others. For example, you are preparing a newscast and one of the items is the highlights of a politician's speech. Time being limited you can use just so much and, you know, it's so easy to make a man look bad.

³The filmed shots shown by Mr. Michaels at this point and later in his talk cannot be described in detail because in part they had been edited out of material actually presented on television.

You may say that this sort of thing can be done—and is done—in print and that is so. But again we come to this matter of impact. When you read a man quoted as calling another “a slimy, dirty rat” or something equally endearing, you tend to respond with a raised eyebrow. When you hear the man say it and watch his face while he does it, your reaction, too, will be much stronger.

Then, too, the eye can glide over and frequently ignore what you do not care to read. But have you ever tried to concentrate on a book while Junior is watching some atrocious trash on the TV set?

There are other traps for the unwary, or, if you prefer, opportunities for the unscrupulous. Since the Supreme Court’s famous decision on racial integration in the schools, I have been assigned to almost every story of any prominence in this area.

I do not like these assignments. It is not enjoyable to watch fears and passions unmasked, hate running rampant. The reporter, be he local or a stranger, is an unwanted interloper bringing to the public’s attention a situation which those participating in would rather conceal. If, on top of this, you have to stand out there next to or in front of a large, highly noticeable motion picture camera, you soon find yourself the focus of all the hostility in such a highly charged atmosphere.

That, however, is personal and not important to the audience. They are interested in what appears on the home screen, the pictures and impressions you bring into their living rooms.

Do you show them everything? That sounds like the fairest thing to do. But is it?

Consider. Last fall in Nashville, Tennessee, racial integration was introduced at the first-grade level. Next year it is supposed to include both first and second graders and so on all the way up.

The hope, of course, is that such a gradual procedure will hold tension to a minimum and satisfy the courts.

You’ll remember that there was, however, strong feeling. Had we shown everything that went on within range of our camera, our audience would have seen little but unbridled violence on that first day. We would have shown frightened parents hustling their youngsters past shrieking mobs. There would have been objects being thrown and knives flashing, agitators whooping it up before Ku Klux Klan signs. A thoroughly unwholesome picture, but a true one.

Well, a partially true one. The rest of the story was not before the cameras. It was the vast majority of Nashville citizens who went about their business as usual, who did not, perhaps, necessarily care for integration but who do believe in the law, unlike the filthy-mouthed women and the KKK fanatics who that night dynamited one of the schools.

I watched another television newsman interview one of them and it was quite an interview. We didn’t do it. We did not want to leave the impression across the country that the stringy-haired haridans and loutish Klansmen represented this City. Since time would not allow us to show the best of the City, we felt it unfair to show the worst. Believe me, it was no easy decision. The dramatic moments are the ones audiences remember and I delight in them as much as the next one. But, again, in my opinion one of television’s prime responsibilities is, in situations like this, to be selective and to include *not only* what is essential but to exclude such things as might present false impressions.

I’ll go a step farther—and this may shock some—and say that there are times when it is incumbent upon a television reporter to delete film merely because of the emotional wallop it may have. And here I’d like to illustrate with some actual film of the story I have in mind.

Last fall a self-styled preacher named Cole, who is also a Ku Klux Klan leader, was carrying on in the vicinity of Lumberton, North Carolina. Now, this is a rather unusual area in that its population is divided almost equally into white, Negro, and Indian. Mr. Cole had already worked over the Negroes and now was starting on a new tack. A couple of crosses were burned in front of Indian homes in the all-Indian community of Pembroke and a Klan rally was announced.

Some Klansmen turned out and a great many more Indians who, obviously according to plan and with the passive acquiescence of the authorities, proceeded to break up the meeting and run the Klansmen off, to the vast amusement of most of the country.

We covered the story and, as part of it, interviewed one of the Indians who organized the counter-attack. He was Simeon Oxendine, the son of Pembroke's Mayor and the County V.F.W. chief.

Here is what we used of him on the air and, incidentally, an interview which constituted part of the same story with Mr. Cole. I'm showing the latter for another reason which I believe will be quickly apparent.

(OXENDINE AND COLE INTERVIEW)

That Cole interview was the final confirmation for me of my truly unconscious habit of upstaging certain types of people.

But getting back to Mr. Oxendine. That wasn't all he had to say. Let me show you another section, a portion of the interview we chose to delete.

(SECOND OXENDINE INTERVIEW)

Were we right to leave it out? I say we were. This is an area in which emotions are invariably at fever pitch. Whether what he said was true or not, it was not directly related to the story and was bound to have violent repercussions. Based on past experience I don't think it too far-fetched to say that we could have been responsible for bloodshed. This does not mean that all delicate situations should be ducked. If it constitutes a legitimate and integral part of the story, it must go in no matter what the impact.

The knowledge of this power is something a television reporter must live with at all times. It is, in one sense, a source of pride to most of us, for we know that we work in a medium whose ability to inform in an interesting manner is unlimited. We can perceive, I don't think over-optimistically, still brighter horizons ahead. In the years to come we will be transmitting from overseas, and Americans will be able to see and hear what happened in, say, Germany, in a matter of hours after the event, often while it is taking place. As we are able to reach out farther technically, we expect news and its related fields to assume a role of ever-increasing importance in broadcasting.

But this is a two-edged sword. The greater our power to convince, the more conscious we must be that our job is neither to convince or to convert, but to inform. We walk a gossamer-thin tight-rope between the Scylla of propaganda on the one hand and the Charybdis of dullness on the other.

The Obvious Content of Freshman English¹

DUDLEY BAILEY²

For several years now, a good deal of the energy of the CCCC has been spent worrying about the forthcoming "bulge." A few years ago, we were told by chairmen from large midwestern universities that Freshman English constituted a very large portion of their total teaching and that they could no longer ignore that fact. Two years ago we all heard of the Oregon Plan. Last year we were informed of experimentation with television; and within the year most of us have heard of other experiments utilizing "master-teacher" plans. Through all these years and more besides, we have discussed the problems of recruiting of teachers, and we have ranged from the sweeping of streets for unwary shopping housewives to serious talk of summer inservice training programs on a co-operative basis.

Everyone is concerned with the *who* of the bulge: *who* will teach them when they come? And yet the increased means of teaching them does not seem to be forthcoming. Certainly it is not forthcoming from presently oriented Ph.D. mills.

My own feeling is that we might have saved ourselves some of the worry of the last few years. For I am convinced that a basic problem of Freshman English is not one of staff, but rather one of the aims and content of our courses. Our present situation, the result in good part of a foolish and indeed suicidal assumption, offers no solution to our problems, whether we miraculously find staffs or not. For the present aims of Freshman English are hopelessly confused with the aims of a college education, and the content of our courses is so extensive and

yet so nebulous that it may be accurately said in many instances to be no content at all.

This sobering situation is owing primarily to the "service-course" doctrine, easily one of the worst conceived notions in modern education. It comes out something like this. Our colleagues in our colleges and universities teach some subject matter or other: economists teach economics, botanists teach botany, horticulturists teach horticulture, historians teach history; indeed, some of our closer colleagues teach American or British literature. But we, alas, perform a "service" — or more politely, we teach "skills," ranging from general college orientation to getting around in the library and preparing term papers for our subject-matter colleagues. And this noxious "service" notion has crept to upper levels in our departments—to "special" composition courses, for students in engineering, in agriculture, and in business administration, and to curiously "packaged" introductory literature courses, aimed at elementary school teachers and hence flavored heavily with children's literature or regional writers or aimed at physical education majors and hence devoted in good part to pointing up such things as the resemblances between the medieval knight and the modern professional athlete. Furthermore, the "service" doctrine has led us to junior-level qualifying examinations and the institution of "bonehead English" on the upper-class level. And, as though the joke could never end, we have found ourselves with English requirements in some of our graduate schools and what are often called "refresher" courses in the elementary conventions of collegiate writing.

The result is that we have become a sort of service organization. Like the janitors, we perform a "valuable service"

¹A paper presented in the First General Session, CCCC meeting in Philadelphia, Hotel Benjamin Franklin, March 27, 1958.

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for our various colleges. But we are not really a part of any of them. Our own colleagues in English look upon us with friendly toleration—if they are not overly candid—or outright contempt—if they are starchy and honest. Only at our conventions do we assume any importance in the scheme of things; and I have often thought of this convention as the largest wound-licking convocation in the teaching profession.

Well, what are we to do about our plight? Obviously we should know what *not* to do. To persist in the patterns dominant in Freshman English at present is to persist in folly, failure, and frustration; it is to remain the despair of our students and the laughing-stock of our colleagues. And we should take no great pride in our having whipped, by some gimmick or other, the battle of the bulge, if, bulging with students and staff, we find our victory only the multiplication of our present woes—more Freshman English, more sophomore special courses, more junior testing for literacy, more writing clinics for upper-classmen, more bonehead refreshers for graduate students. I should look forward to that victory with about the same enthusiasm as I should greet a victory in an all-out atomic war.

This is what I think we should do. First, we should disavow, clearly and unequivocally, any peculiar or special responsibility for the "English" of our student bodies. Student English is properly the business of all of the faculties of all colleges. No Freshman English staff confers degrees upon students; and no Freshman English staff is properly charged with giving anybody a liberal education in six or nine or twelve semester hours. Insofar as our various "services" imply an especial obligation, we should work—and work without ceasing—to get rid of them. Ideally, all writing clinics, all special English tests, all bonehead refresher courses, all tailored com-

position courses, all "package" literature courses should be dropped forthwith; and above all, the responsibility for student English, which has been "referred" to us for years, should be referred, immediately and unmistakably, to the only people with whom it can practicably rest, all the faculty members of our institutions, who have long enjoyed a vacation from their responsibilities, whilst we have undertaken the drudgery of their proper tasks.

Secondly, we should clearly state and carefully limit our subject matter. Now, I believe that we have a subject matter, although we have tried hard—and quite successfully—to pretend that it doesn't exist. I believe, furthermore, that our subject matter is as interesting and as vital and as important as anything that our colleagues have to teach our students. I am content that grammar and rhetoric are as demanding, as exhilarating, and as important theoretical subjects as physics or calculus or economics, and a good deal more so than several other subjects I could mention. I am content that a knowledge of English syntax may be as exciting and as meaningful to college students as a knowledge of the factoring of binomials or a knowledge of the causes of the Civil War or a knowledge of the evidences of the evolution of the species or a knowledge of American Transcendentalism. I believe that it is as important for students to know the International Phonetic Alphabet as it is for them to know the periodic table of the elements. I am even suspicious—if you will allow me to suggest an example that if nothing else will suggest the extent of my bias in these matters—I am even suspicious that Grimm's law is really as exciting as Gresham's and that the discoveries of the linguists in the past century are as pertinent as those of Newton and those of Mendel to us and our students. But in our present Freshman English courses,

precious little, if any, of this exciting knowledge filters through; indeed, Freshman English teachers seem discouraged from learning anything about many of these matters by the intellectual paralysis which attends the "service course." To announce that we have a subject matter would be to rejuvenate our teachers' intellectual curiosity generally, I am sure.

But a clear statement of our subject matter might greatly grieve some members of our own ranks, who, having been privileged to pass along a muddling of Bishop Lowth on one day, a muddling of George Campbell on the next, a muddling of Thorstein Veblen on the next and perhaps a muddling of Alfred North Whitehead on the next, have got naively smug that they alone, of all the faculty members, may give meaning to their students' academic lives and that they alone are infallibly purveyors of vital intellectual experiences. To state our subject matter clearly will also, no doubt, offend some who, secure in their conclusion that we have none, have highly developed what are usually called "classroom techniques" and have gained some eminence as doctors without license, priests without ordination, or psychiatrists without couches.

But we must assert that we are teachers of a subject matter; and we must, I believe, take care to limit that subject matter rigidly. I should propose the limiting of our subject matter to whatever of the following four areas we can hope to cover with decency in the time allotted us, given the present freshmen with whom we have to deal (whom we may deplore all we please, but cannot change overnight):

1st, an introduction to the vocabulary of the language, in which students would learn something of the history of their language, analyze systematically the word-sources of modern English, and, I should hope, be taught something of

English spelling and syllabication.

2nd, an introduction to the grammar of modern English, in which students would be taught a coherent description of modern English which makes full use of the findings of twentieth-century linguistic study.

3rd, an introduction to the principles of rhetoric, in which students would learn the forms of discourse and an analysis of the traditional methods and devices of each, and their logical substructure, perhaps.

4th, an introduction to literature, in which students might be taught the basic prosodic forms, something of the syntactical differences between prose and verse, rudimentary distinctions of the various literary genres, and the basic literary devices.

Now, my proposal may not strike anybody as very revolutionary in its scope. But throughout, I should insist upon these matters as *subject matters*, not as crutches or incidentals to student writing. I think we should ask our students to write, and often, but only as our colleagues ask them to. The stuff of our writing assignments should be the stuff of our courses, and our examinations should be clearly restricted to that subject matter. So, just as the historian has his students write about history, and the botanist has his students write about botany, and the mathematician has—or should have—his students write about mathematics, and indeed our colleagues have their students write about American or British literature—so we should have them write about language, about grammar, about rhetoric, about figurative language, about linguistic symbols of various sorts, and the like. And our examinations should be contrived to assure us that our students have learned the subject matter which we have always rather hazily assumed that they—and for that matter we—should know.

In short, I am arguing for a course *in* something in the same sense that other arguing for consistency in what we do college courses are *in* something. I am from day to day, for an abolition of the sort of grab-bag courses in which students may haphazardly half-way study problems of modern English inflections on Monday and Wednesday and then on Friday write a 500-word theme on their last fishing trip or hazing in the fraternity or the dangers of alcoholism. This distractedness of our courses has never made any sense to students or teachers either. And it has led to frustration and cynicism on the students' part. The most common observation I have made as I have talked with hundreds of students from my own and other institutions is that they never know what they "had" in Freshman English. And there is a clear note of disgust or contempt when they tell me that they "read some stories" and they "wrote some more stories." It's a rare one, indeed, who can go beyond that nebulous remark, or who wants to. If I mention "aspect" or "voice" or "exposition" or "metaphor" to them, they stare at me in bewilderment. In the normal sense of the term, they may not be said to have *learned* anything at all; and they are all painfully aware of it.

More consequential in many ways, I think, is the effect of the nebulous writing-centered course upon teachers. It, more than any other factor, I am persuaded, has aggravated the general restiveness of teachers to escape as soon as possible and by whatever means the Freshman English ordeal. Let us give these teachers a clear and unambiguous subject matter, about which they can lecture and upon which they can focus their class discussions and free them from the oblivion of interminable theme-reading, and we shall find a radically different attitude amongst our staffs.

I recognize, of course, that there will be those who will grieve over such a limitation of our subject as I have outlined. Such a limitation will annoy those who have found in library tours, individual conferences, group projects, and never-ending series of five-minute student speeches an escape from responsible teaching. There are some three-dollar bills in the currency of our profession—but we should look at the good money which Gresham assures us will in time chase the counterfeit from circulation. Quite understandably a limitation of subject matter will grieve some of our number who—with theoretical sanction, if not with any very noteworthy results, to my knowledge—have labored to extend the Freshman English course to a consideration of the full range of human communication. I myself have rather more sympathy with this sort of micro-cosmic encyclopedism, however, than I can afford: my university at present allows me only three semesters with most of its students. It rather begrudgingly allows the third semester, and, with rising requirements in the various colleges, may not long prove so generous as it now is.

A different sort of objection to what I propose we need not be undone by: the cry that the graduate school does not prepare people to teach grammar and rhetoric. Graduate schools do not prepare people to teach anything that they must teach for the first years—or perhaps all the years—of their careers, as all of us know who remember the frantic preparations which we found necessary for the first sophomore literature courses which we had to teach.

More serious, of course, is another criticism—that the pointing of Freshman English directly at subject matter and the attendant reduction in student writing will result in markedly inferior student writing. I cannot answer this crit-

icism with any proof, I'm afraid. But I'm just as afraid that our assumption that we materially affect the writing of our students is more an assumption of faith than of knowledge. Curiously, nobody seems very eager to find out how true it is. In the many experiments we have all read about with some interest, I observe that none have been so brave as to test results against a real control group—namely, a group of college students who are not taking any Freshman English at all. There is an old saw that a student must learn to write by writing. But putting that saw into purely quantitative terms—suggesting that the student who writes twenty themes learns to write twice as well as the one who writes ten—is an instance of pious foolishness which any grown person should be heartily asamed of—especially if he has read student papers over a number of years.

I have faith that we will do more good for student writing by giving our students a thorough knowledge of the nature of their language and of our rhetorical traditions than any amount of the sort of foolish busywork presently being perpetrated could hope to afford them. Unless we have money for a really workable tutorial system,—and indeed even if we have one—we are well advised to give student and teacher alike a nomenclature with which to talk sensibly and accurately about the writing which the student does. We simply *must* find some way to end the student paper dotted in the margins with *K*'s and *Awk*'s and *Gr*'s—those infallible signs of teacher ignorance—and capped with such comment as "Your content is good, but your expression poor."

I believe that we may reasonably expect some changes in graduate training

as soon as we settle upon a clear body of knowledge in which our potential teachers should have some training. I do not see how we can reasonably expect any changes until we do. I believe, as I have already said, that we shall find a new spirit on our staffs as soon as we establish our subject matter, and not until. I believe that we shall find a hearty vote of thanks from our colleagues teaching upperclass literature courses as soon as we take upon ourselves to teach their potential student the rudimentary matters which they have a right to expect him to know before he enters junior or senior courses. I believe that our friends in the high schools will perceive in our clearly outlined courses a framework within which the joint labors of high school and college may be articulated. I believe that our students will rejoice in the end of the long reign of chaos and old night, will look forward to Freshman English as a subject they can sensibly work at and will look back at it as a course whose benefits to them are understandable, tangible, and ever-renewing. And I believe that, by opening new fields for research and scholarly contributions, those of us who are blessed with really intelligent and wise administrative superiors can hope to provide some basis for recommendation for promotion and tenure besides the foggy and unpersuasive "service to the institution" with which at present we must be content. Perhaps we may find some sense in the oft-repeated assertion that Freshman English is the center of the college curriculum and come to believe that the all but universal requirement of Freshman English is something besides an ironic academic accident.

Literature in the Composition Course

JOHN A. HART, ROBERT C. SLACK,

NEAL WOODRUFF, JR.¹

The Freshman English course seems these days to have fallen victim to its past. Teachers of the course, when not sunk in baffled uncertainty, disagree vastly on what the entering freshman should be taught and how. Superficially, the uncertainty and disagreement are puzzling, for few teachers will dissent from the judgment that the freshman above all needs desperately to learn to write. He lacks grammatical sense; he has barely a nodding acquaintance with the fundamental decencies of writing; most appalling, he lacks ability to compose—to find workable subjects, to give them substance and form, to communicate them effectively to a reader. Plainly the aim of the freshman course should be to fill these abysmal gaps. But the bafflement arises over *how* to do it, and especially over how to confer some vitality on the process. For the course has been presided over from of old by that nemesis of Alexander Pope, the spectre of Dullness. The tradition has become almost immemorial that senior teachers avoid Freshman English like the plague and that the student does his best to sleep his way successfully through it.

It is easy to see how this state of affairs came to be. In the traditional course, the student purchased a reputable handbook to assist him with problems in grammar and furnish advice on how to organize and polish his compositions. He purchased also a thick anthology of readings, the staple of which was expository essays; these essays supposedly provided him with models of good prose style and with ideas to write themes about. In the second semester,

he reached the high-water mark of the course by reading a nineteenth-century novel of sterling reputation. But because the readings were chiefly expository essays, the course had two strikes against it from the start. For the college freshman was not prepared to deal with the capsulized, abstract statement of expository prose. When he had to write something related to the finished thought of a professional expository piece, he could go no further than acceptance or denial of the thought at the level of generalization. Nine times out of ten he could not support his generalizations in concrete terms because he simply did not know enough. For the student, most theme assignments meant the pursuit of a phantom which was to be brought back to the instructor in full dress. No wonder the instructor yawned as the student's effort grew ever more half-hearted.

Since World War II, experiments have been made in reorganizing Freshman English on a variety of principles, all by teachers bent on giving life to a dying course through new materials and new emphasis. The expository anthology has become a collection of pieces on issues presumably vital in the freshman's restricted world, pieces, it has been hoped, which would make a lively claim upon his personal experience. Or, the anthology has been replaced by a book of "cases" from history or current events, research materials concocted for student analysis and commentary. Emphasis has shifted to semantics and communications; or to logic, to "thinking before you write." Most recently, the teacher has been advised to reeducate his students in English grammar by using the

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findings of structural linguistics. Each of these expedients has its use and value, but none of them, used to organize the full course, gets it out of the doldrums. The teacher's initial excitement over a method may luckily prove infectious among his students for a time, but soon Dullness prevails again. He may grope for a final solution amongst this proliferation of gimmicks, but his reward is always a handful of dust.

One new development alone shows promise of giving sustained vitality to the course. Entering students, it has been rediscovered, are capable of being thrilled by literature—by *The Brothers Karamazov*, by *Oedipus Tyrannus*, even by *The Education of Henry Adams*. They are excited by such books; they discuss them with eager interest; they respond readily to writing assignments based upon them. And teachers seem equally delighted; their accounts of freshman courses in which such books are read glow with pleasure over the students' response. In consequence, many colleges have adopted a new plan by which major works of literature are read, discussed, and written about in the freshman year. Only one thing seems wrong: the freshman course has become a course in literature. One looks through descriptions of its different versions in vain for a statement of how and when composition is taught, and one concludes that it takes a secondary and slighted place. Thus in licking Dullness, teachers have substituted for one sort of course an entirely different sort. A new route has been found, but it seems to lead to a new destination.

We believe that this rich vein may be profitably worked, that the student's interest may be aroused and maintained, that the instructor may deal with material of which he feels confident—in

short, that literature may be used—without deflecting the freshman course from its primary aim, the teaching of composition. In this belief, we have been experimenting over the past few years in our courses at Carnegie Institute of Technology.

In order to use literature effectively in the composition course, we have found, the teacher must observe three conditions. The first may be defined with deceptive ease, but it is perhaps the most difficult of the three for the teacher to follow: he must firmly resist the temptation to *teach* literature. He must avoid considering literary form, presenting biographical data, analyzing structure, and giving interpretations of meaning. He must set aside the natural impulse of the teacher of literature to elucidate, to fill in the background, and to make literary judgments. Further, he should not feel that he needs to teach literature in the interest of composition. It is easy for him to rationalize that he ought to discuss a work in some detail to prepare his students to write well about it in their papers; but even this seems an unwise and unnecessary diversion from the main business of a composition course. After carefully choosing the works of literature to be read by the class, the instructor should let these works make their own way and concentrate his teaching effort upon composition.

The second condition, following directly from the first, is that the literature chosen be the kind that the student can comprehend without elaborate help from his instructor or from class discussion. This means that works must have settings which are relatively close to the student in time, and that they must have a more or less realistic surface which enables him, despite unsophisticated reading habits, to enter immediately into the story. We have found too that compre-

hension is most likely to occur if each piece of reading is long enough for the student to become thoroughly familiar with a given fictional world. Consequently we have experimented with modern novels (or with novel-like presentations of factual experience, such as Hersey's *Hiroshima*) which are relatively clear and simple in style and in which major thematic concerns stand out plainly. Such books in both substance and idiom speak directly to the student and are most likely to build upon his previous reading experience.

The student is expected—and we find he is able—to comprehend the plain content of the literature. Each book is looked upon as a segment of real life which the student is privileged to see with special clarity, rather than as a structural art-product fashioned by the shaping mind of an author. The student is encouraged to deal with the imaginative world of a novel as a presentation of fact; the characters are assumed to be real people and their decisions thus become actual problems in human conduct. This simplifying emphasis on the mimetic aspect of literature no doubt does some violence to its true nature, but we find that it spares students a great deal of perplexity and that in the end it increases their capacity to read good literature with understanding.

One advantage that this deliberate policy has for the teaching of composition is that every student's writing is based on a definite and verifiable ground of reference—a fictional world which is open to examination. The student's perceptions of that world, as expressed in his writing, can be substantiated by the concrete "facts" of that world, "facts" available to every member of the class and to the teacher. Misreadings of that world can be quickly detected.

We should like to emphasize the im-

portance of choosing works of some length. For our purposes a novel is more satisfactory than a short-story, or even a drama. The novel builds up its imaginary world with a richness of concrete detail, and it develops the problems and motivations of the characters at length. The student is thus supplied with a wealth of raw material. In staying with the world of the novel for a span of time, he becomes intimately familiar with it and the people in it. He *knows* what he is writing about. Furthermore, the nature of the novel is such that without literary instruction the student can and does become emotionally engaged with the characters and events of the story. Thus he not only knows what he is writing about; he *cares* about what he is saying. The subject matter of his composition thus contains a powerful motivating influence which is a bonanza for the teacher of writing.

No doubt there are many books which would produce the results we seek. Among those which we have used with success are *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, *The Late George Apley*, *The Moon and Sixpence*, *Hiroshima*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Ox-Bow Incident*, *The Age of Innocence*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *All the King's Men*.

The two conditions which we have outlined—that the instructor remind himself constantly not to teach a literature course, and that the students be asked to read and write about works which immediately make sense to them—are effective only if a third condition is fulfilled. This is that the instructor plan writing assignments and class discussions with two closely related aims in mind: that every writing assignment call upon the student to examine a significant aspect of the novel being read; and that every students simply to search out the evidence necessary to establish an answer

writing assignment be directed toward a particular kind of compositional problem. These two aims are distinguishable, but they work hand in hand to sustain the student's interest in the subject matter of his writing and to provide material for pointed discussion of individual aspects of composition. Every assignment should shoot at both aims.

Because this third condition is more complex than either of the other two, we will spell it out with some specific examples based on our experience. We divide a novel into relatively short reading assignments. In addition to reading, the student is required for each class to write on a specified subject in the novel. For two days of the week, he writes only a paragraph or two, and for every third assignment—once a week—he writes a fully developed theme concerned with a larger portion of the reading. Every writing assignment calls for material which provides illustrations of whatever compositional problem the instructor wishes the class to focus upon.

If the work to be read is *Huckleberry Finn*, for example, and the instructor wishes the class to discuss different kinds of paragraphing, he will give questions about the reading which require different treatment, such as: "What is Huck's attitude toward conventional religion?" and "In the early chapters of the book, does the behavior of Huck or of Tom Sawyer seem more realistic?" The first question requires straightforward development of an idea; the second necessitates development by means of comparison.

Or if the compositional problem is to be the gathering of evidence, the instructor may ask: "What lies does Huck tell out of loyalty to Jim?" This requires to the question. If the instructor then

wishes to discuss the selection of significant evidence, he may ask: "What lies told by Huck are most important for protecting Jim?" If he wishes to emphasize the interpretation of significant evidence, he may ask the students to write a justification of Huck's lying. The answer to this question would undoubtedly be a full-length theme in which the student would have to consider what lying Huck does, what purpose it serves, and what would happen if Huck told the truth.

It ought to be said that this method may be used equally well in courses where emphasis is given to communication problems rather than problems in composition. For instance, the student may be required to write two answers to the same question—one for a person who has read the novel and the other for a person who has not. Later class discussion takes up the question of what material (and how much of it) will make each answer understandable to the person who reads it. Or, the student may be asked to write a statement for an opinionated reader: "For someone who dismisses *Huckleberry Finn* as a 'kid's book,' write a justification of Huck's lying." This subject opens up a moral issue which is anything but childish, and through it the student can convincingly demonstrate to his reader that this is a novel which deserves careful study. Sometimes the student can be asked to analyze a specific instance of communication which appears in the text of the novel, for instance: "Discuss the respective word skills of the Duke and the King"; or, "Consider Colonel Sherburn's communication to the mob and explain what makes it effective."

Thus, for a given novel, questions may be given to the student which will make

him work out almost any problem in composition or communication that the instructor wishes to discuss.

The classroom hour itself focuses on discussion of students' current writing, a procedure which has a number of advantages. The class is dealing always with its own work and with its immediate writing problems. This work is based upon material in possession of each member of the class and verifiable at any time. Discussion can be fruitful and lively because the material itself is concrete and specific, and inherently interesting.

The classroom discussion is given direction by the writing assignment. Since each assignment makes a specific demand on the student, the class session usually turns out to be a collective effort to determine what demand the assignment is making and how best to satisfy it. The instructor guides this effort by asking the right questions, by resolving impasses, and by drawing together loose ends; his aim is always to aid the class in arriving at ideas about composition which it finds meaningful, useful, immediately applicable.

This daily routine may seem likely to diminish, if not destroy, the student's interest in the work of literature read and so defeat the original purpose of using literature. But this will not happen if the second aim of the instructor's planning is kept in mind: that he ask the student continually to examine significant aspects of the novels read. He can do this by building a kind of continuity in the questions given that will lead the students step by step toward the comprehension of some of the central issues or "meanings" in each book. The process may be illustrated by a series of questions based on *Huckleberry Finn*. The nine questions call for daily written an-

swers; every third question demands a full-length theme.

1. What is Huck's attitude toward conventional religion?
2. In what ways does Huck exhibit ingenuity in escaping from his father?
3. Analyse with illustrations the quality and limitations of Huck's intelligence. (based on Chapters 1-12)

These questions attempt to make the student focus on some of Huck's character traits as they are developed in the first part of the novel.

4. Why does Huck play the trick on Jim and how does he feel about it afterwards?
5. What lies does Huck tell to save Jim and how does he feel about them afterwards?
6. Discuss the good and evil consequences of lying, using examples from *Huckleberry Finn*. (based on the novel through Chapter 29)

Questions 4-6 concern the moral strength Huck develops through examining the consequences of his own actions rather than relying on conventional dicta.

7. Why is Huck in a dilemma over whether to protect Jim or turn him in to the authorities?
8. Does Huck reveal himself to be more or less intelligent than Tom Sawyer?
9. A superficial look at *Huckleberry Finn* might lead to the conclusion that it is about an ignorant boy who is trying to escape and dodge his responsibilities to society in order to be a loafer. Discuss the extent to which the opposite is actually true. (based on entire book)

The final group of questions highlights the thesis that Huck, endowed with native intelligence, grows through his experience to a maturity denied to Tom Sawyer and the other "conventional" characters. The ninth question requires the student to come to terms with Huck's discovery that gaining freedom entails

the acceptance of responsibility.

The sequence of books read during a semester is likewise chosen with care so that they will cluster about some major theme-idea and will serve to reinforce or to contrast with one another. For example, one sequence which we have used successfully develops the theme of personal integrity. In this sequence the class reads in order *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, *The Late George Apley*, and *The Moon and Sixpence*. A few theme assignments, one given at the completion of each book, bring out the significant relationships.

1. In what sense is this the story of the rise of Silas Lapham?
2. In the light of the whole book, what does this statement of Apley's reveal about his character: "Nothing which is worth while is easy, nor in my experience is the actual doing of it particularly pleasant"?
3. What do you believe integrity is? Which comes closest to satisfying your definition—Lapham, Apley, or Strickland?

To recapitulate, our three conditions for success in using literature in the teaching of composition are these: that the instructor teach composition, not literature; that the literary works chosen be manageable by the student without scholarly or critical aid and afford him a lengthy soaking in an experience which holds his interest; and that the writing assignments based on literature challenge the student to find meaning in what he reads and pose a calculated variety of particular compositional problems. We readily confess that even if these conditions are observed, a class in Freshman English remains less exciting than an evening in the theater, less delightful than an afternoon at the beach. It will probably always be so. But we have found that the use of literature in accordance with these conditions puts life into the student's effort and inspirits the teacher's work. And this carries us a long way in the campaign to conquer Dullness.

Staff Room Interchange

Giving the Long Paper Purpose

The "long" paper, stimulus to increased use of the library, final proof of a freshman's ability to organize intelligently a relatively long body of material, and prerequisite for the more advanced papers of the next three years, has become, in many cases, a bore to the student who feels that the assignment is completely artificial and to the instructor who knows it is. The plan offered below was successful in one first-semester course here in giving purpose to the assignment of a first college research paper.

We began with a relatively simple questionnaire, the return of this questionnaire to the students, library investigation as a check on available material, and a final

decision on the topic. Then came the preliminary reading, the preparation of the outline, and the actual writing of the paper.

Students received the questionnaire without comment or previous discussion. It requested the name and probable major, minor, and career of the student. It also included the following questions: Is there some personal problem, i.e. budget, aids to vision, illness, diet, choice of career, on which you would like information? Is there an author whom we have studied about whom you would like to know more? Is there some problem or area of study related to this or any other course, in which you have lately become interested? Is there some current

problem on which you feel you should be better informed? Have you another term paper to write this semester? If so, for what course? At the bottom of the page was a space for the term paper topic.

Accustomed to the vagaries of professors, the freshmen showed no surprise and responded with interest. During that first hour they were allowed as much time as they needed to think about the questions. The fact that most of the papers were returned within twenty minutes seemed to indicate that the subjects mentioned were uppermost in the minds of the students.

The variety was rewarding. Among the responses were these: "I would like to know more about diet," wrote a short, stocky Italian boy. "I have to watch my weight or I soon look short and fat." A girl whose themes had hinted at many family problems expressed interest in "the Women's Marine Corps as a career." The daughter of an Army officer stationed in the South wrote that she was looking for information on "southern schools to attend next year so that I can be near my family." "My little brother has a hole in his heart . . . This will have to be patched if he is to live to grow up," was a serious-looking Jewish boy's reason for wanting to know of the latest techniques in heart surgery. A girl in the class expressed a desire to learn about allergies: "I am allergic to grass." Another girl, who had a very different problem, wrote, "My fiancée is a member of a church I don't understand."

The responses to the question about authors made the assignment of several of the papers relatively simple. One girl wrote that she thought "Stephen Crane is very interesting. I'm impressed by the fact that he wrote *The Red Badge of Courage* and had never experienced a war." Other members of the group wanted to know more about writers whom we had studied during the semester—Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Faulkner, and others.

Concerning recently acquired interests, one girl wrote, "We discussed movie censorship in Speech, and I would like to find out more about it." A future engineer indicated enthusiasm for "most types of construction." Another student wanted to learn the background of the Mayerling Tragedy. Still another wanted to investigate the uses of felt as a material. In many instances, a course had opened possibilities of research. This was especially true in such fields as geology, finance, and home economics.

When the questionnaires were handed back, each student had three possible general research topics listed on his sheet, each one based on an interest he had indicated. He could use any one of them, but he was required to investigate the available material in the library, narrow his topic to one which would be suitable for the kind of paper he was expected to write, and submit his final choice by the following Monday.

Although some of the assignment suggestions were obvious, others were made on a different basis. One of the brightest members of the class had asked casually one day before the bell rang, how it is possible to compute a person's vocabulary. His paper was the answer to his question. A Negro student had written a theme about his fascination with the few great bridges he had seen. His research paper on the greatest bridges of the United States was an inspiration to all of us. The psychology major whose hobby was music based her study on music therapy in the treatment of mental illness, a field in which our own university has done noteworthy work. A journalism major investigated the beginnings of the great newspapers of our day and learned of the men who gave them their start.

Naturally, too, there were changes in the choices as plans and circumstances changed or as news was made. The girl who had planned to transfer to a southern school suddenly learned that her family would be sent to Japan and began an investigation of the possibilities of higher education at the University of Tokyo. Another student was informed of unusual illness in his family and wanted to learn as much as he could about the disease. Race problems, news from Russia, news of labor unions—all these prompted changes, and whenever such changes were justified and possible, we made them.

Since many of the students had never before written long papers, we used class time to discuss the method of assembling material, the use of index cards for notes, the dangers of plagiarism, the worth of a really workable outline, the correct form of footnotes, and the proper method of preparing a bibliography. Conference hours increased as unusual problems arose.

When finally the papers had been typed and handed in, the members of the class wrote on what writing them had meant. Typical comments were the following: "I

never realized before that a research paper could be so interesting." "I thought my research paper was very beneficial to me. This was primarily because it was on a subject I was very much interested in." "I would like to take my research paper home, if I may, so that my parents can see all the advances which have been made in heart surgery. I am sure they will be encouraged about my brother." "It [writing the paper] was certainly not a waste of time. I am now doing further research on this same subject for a Government class." "Doing this work was very helpful to me. I had thought I knew quite a lot about the subject, but I changed my mind as I read." "I am going to join the Women's Marine Corps and would like to use your name as reference." "Now that I understand my fiancée's religious beliefs, I feel sure that we can

work out our differences and have a good marriage."

The freshman in college takes English Composition because it is required and not, as a rule, because he chooses to take it. He writes a long paper because it, too, is required. Whether his paper is related to his English course or to a totally different subject, he can learn to use the library, to organize material, and to write. He deserves the privilege of investigating an area in which he is interested, of finding out what he really wants to know. And the instructor, who must grade thirty (or ninety) long papers, deserves the unmixed blessing which the variety of work so motivated will provide.

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The Fallacy of the Single Remedial Writing Instructor

Students who have difficulty with writing need help with writing. Nothing could be more logical! And, of course, the teacher of writing is the one to give that help. Very logical again! Therefore, if you have students with writing difficulties, send them to this particular teacher and stop worrying about them. A most logical and satisfying conclusion!

Having been this chosen teacher, I may be allowed to tell a few anecdotes that will speak more strongly than logical argument.

At a state English meeting, instructors of various colleges were groaning under the composition problems of their freshmen. A colleague from my college rose and said with satisfaction: "I never have to worry about composition problems. When I find students with writing difficulties, I send them directly to my good friend with the remedial work, and she takes them in hand."

A student was sent for help with spelling. The paper he brought was covered with incredibly non-phonetic misspellings of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Achilles, Odysseus, Oedipus, Teiresias, Telemachus. It was obvious that he had never pronounced these names. For two weeks we worked to see the names in reading and to pronounce them correctly. However, I was thereby poaching on others' preserves—not to mention that of the subject-matter teacher—for the college provides other clinics for remedial reading and remedial speech. But it was

only the student's writing that annoyed the instructor.

A history teacher sent a student for help in "organizing material." Evidence of the student's need was a paper with a highly confused attempt to discuss the causes of the Hundred Years War. When I asked her to list the causes, I found her as helpless orally as she had been in writing. She was being asked to "organize material" that was not present in her mind. Was the remedial writing instructor to become a history tutor?

A music teacher joined me in the lunch room and spoke accusingly: "I have spent fifteen minutes of a period teaching my class how to spell rhythm, and I am not being paid to teach spelling!"

A student was referred who made honor grades except in courses demanding much writing. I found such tension in his hands and facial muscles when he wrote that I suspected a spastic condition and sent him to a neurologist, who diagnosed the condition as psychological tension arising from out-of-school pressures.

I "invited" a student in my literature class to come for help with writing. He hesitated. Finally he said: "This isn't a composition class, but I'll come anyway if you want me to."

As the faculty were gathering for Commencement procession, a senior in cap and gown passed by. The head of a major department stepped over to me. "That is the

worst writer ever to go through this college. How did you let him get by?" I had never seen the young man or heard his name. Apparently all his instructors had accepted or condoned his deficiency.

A student tells the following with great amusement. Her literature professor returned her test paper, crisscrossed with red marks for spelling and punctuation errors. Across the top was written: "See advisor about composition weakness." After class, the girl stopped at the desk of her professor: "You want to see me about my composition weakness," she said. The professor seemed puzzled. The girl pointed to the admonition across the top. "You are my official advisor," she said. The professor looked at the paper gingerly. Then with a fatherly smile, he patted her shoulder, said reassuringly, "Do better," and dismissed her.

Such anecdotes could be continued indefinitely. But these are enough to point up several questions:

1. Does the separation of remedial instruction from regular class work encourage "passing the buck" on the part of the instructor rather than shouldering one's own responsibilities?

2. Does it encourage the student to compartmentalize his learning?

3. Is it not good pedagogy that new words (including proper names) and the organization of new material be learned within the subject-matter context?

4. Are not many of the so-called "writing problems" in reality problems of another nature: lack of knowledge of the subject matter, psychological blocking, poor speech or reading habits, etc.?

5. Is it fair for one instructor to bear the onus for writing deficiencies that have been condoned by other members of the staff?

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Endorsement of the Autobiography

"The Autobiography as Creative Writing" by Ronald Cutler in the February 1958 issue of *College Composition and Communication* proved a very interesting paper from which I extracted the essential material and applied—with original and rewarding results—in my classes in Freshman English in Boston College.

Since I teach English to the freshman classes at the Nursing School, I have the problem of teaching freshmen per se, that is, students fresh from high school, and also, to teach Freshman English to the Graduate Nurses who, although freshmen as far as English is concerned—since not one of them has had English since high school—are a disparate group, indeed, with wide variations in intellectual capacity. In the Nursing School, we offer only one year of English which includes Rhetoric and Prose Composition and one semester in the senior year where some literature is taught. The first year of English is the most important since many of my students in Boston are as insecure as Mr. Cutler finds his freshman to be in Florida.

When I read Mr. Cutler's article, I decided to try the assignment in my classes, for unlike the teachers in the University of Florida, I never asked my students to write an autobiography, principally because of the

expected usually stereotyped response through ignorance of what is expected, inexperience in writing, or of the vague distrust that often exists in the minds of an adolescent.

The two most important points to keep in mind in this particular assignment are, it seems to me, motivation and timing. The motivation is easy, when you follow Mr. Cutler's title "How did I get to be the kind of person I think I am now?" for a guide. This appeals to me very much as it coincides with my practice of getting the student to tell me. One of the chief defects in the teaching of all too many of us is that we talk too much. One of the wisest pedagogical counsels I should like to pass on to others is "Get the student to tell you."

The timing of the autobiography is important also, for if this is assigned too early in the semester, before the student is oriented to her classmates and to her teacher, the results might be platitudinous and commonplace. Up to this point in the course (April of the second semester), the students have been instructed in the fundamental truism that there is no common denominator save that of the principles of good expression in every form of writing. (I must confess that in any form of original expression I rarely over-edit the papers, since

I am more interested in encouraging the flow of ideas.) With this assignment, the veil of reserve was lifted and the students "discovered" that the real business of education is insight—insight into all that the present moment holds in trust for them, as they stand so briefly in its presence between the past and the future.

Passive knowledge of this type has a supreme value in that it enables one to penetrate the barrier of language, into the world of wordless imagery. At this point, it is important to motivate the students to develop their inchoate and nebulous ideas at this razor edge of reality, by selection, exclusion, and juxtaposition into sentences interesting to someone else. To become mentally incisive is surely a not unimportant part of a course in communication.

Mr. Cutler found his students "ham-handed," and to be sure, even with this new approach, I, too, found many ham actors in the inscrutable role of me; but in general, the students seemed sincere, and though many were dramatic and poignant, only a few were theatrical. Many of the papers resulted in a genuinely spontaneous self-revelation, written with sensitivity and charm.

Mr. Cutler confessed that the assignment for him "works best in special writing sections, . . . for . . . superior students." Since my classes are not special in any intellectual connotation, I feel that the assignment is well worthwhile in any freshman class, not only as a means for the expression of ideas, and the opportunity to stimulate the imagination to find new ways of looking at ideas, but also for the "psychological therapeutics" that Mr. Cutler found desirable, and which is almost inevitable.

I would like to quote several selections from a few papers to show the range of original statements, as well as to give a glimpse into the wide variations in the backgrounds of my freshman students.

The forces which have been mainly responsible for me being the kind of person I think I am now, have been adversity and sorrow.

I would like to think I am now less arrogant, less intolerant of the weaknesses of others; a person who has a greater appreciation of the goodness and kindness of others. Unfortunately pride still creeps into my life, and I think it will be a life-long struggle to weed it out.

Perhaps the greatest influence in the forming of my character and making me the kind of person I think I am today was that exerted by my father. He was never satisfied with himself and strove valiantly to make up for

the deficiencies in his childhood. Both his parents had come from Finland and were hard-working, industrious, and saving to the point of frugality. After marriage when his family kept increasing at the rate of a new addition each year, he tried to instill in us his longings for the finer things in life. We children were all named for famous and talented people he admired; Charles Lindberg, Geraldine Farrar, Eleanor Sears.

I was born July 4, 1940, and the same day my mother died.

We did live together once—the four of us: Mom, Dad, Judy, and I. But I was only about three or four years old and I don't remember it; all I know is from what Mom has told me and from old snapshots which are kept in a painted cigar box. The bond of love had started to break long before I was aware of it, but it became evident to me that Mom and Dad had little love left for each other on the morning on which I made my first Holy Communion. I don't even remember what the argument was, but Mom told Dad to leave the house and never come back; we were living in her mother's house, so Dad had one choice, to go. I can still see him combing his hair in front of the mirror, putting the comb in his pocket, and walking dejectedly out the kitchen door.

A Sunday School teacher had told us a story about a man whom God had struck dead with a bolt of lightening as punishment for his sins; one night I was awakened by peals of thunder and I could see the lightening rip the sky. I pulled the covers over my head and covered my heart with my hand; I was terrified.

My adolescent days were peppered with many fine learning experiences. My father, brother, and I spent many days in the warm fields near home exploring craggy holes, decaying trees, crumpled nests, and delicate flowers. We went on many long hikes through the woods hunting feared copperheads and harmless beaver, collecting autumn-adorned leaves, fleecy milk-pods and self-satisfaction when we ignored the severe hurt meted out to our bare legs and arms by the needle-armed brambles. What a wonderful day it was when my brother allowed me to shoot his gun, and when he took his mud-smudged handkerchief and wrapped my glass-gashed bleeding leg. We learned to share together, to enjoy experiences together, to appreciate the beauty in nature: the blossoming dogwood tree, the wiggling polliwogs in the weed-fringed pond, etc., etc., etc.

"Two packages for the price of one," refers to many sundry things. If you asked my petite Irish mother and my fair haired dad, what significance this trite statement had for them you would see their gaze directed toward the fireplace mantle where firmly placed, are two pictures—their son and daughter—their twins. We depict the old poem for Mothers whose author remains anonymous—"a girl who looks like Daddy and a boy who looks like me." It can be a truly wonderful experience to see the world through someone else's eyes as well as your own, from the time you begin

to crawl and explore until your high school education takes you in a different direction. The sharing doesn't end there; in some ways it commences during the teen-age years because this duet can act as an excellent buffer for the laughter and tears of the growing-up years.

* * *

I always wanted a baby sister, but all I had were brothers. Then one wonderful day I learned that I had a baby sister and I ran through the streets with my pigtails flying, crying out to everyone, "I have a sister, I have a sister."

Perhaps there is no one truth and no one life that we live, but rather a headful and a heartful of visions. There is the vision our friends have of us and the vision we have of ourselves. As I attempt to recollect the many influences and incidents within this vision which have made me the person "I think I am now," I realize the many personalities involved . . . etc.

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In Defense of There

Bergen Evans, in *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*, has this to say about constructions of the type "there is nothing wrong": "The *there* construction . . . makes a vague or indefinite statement. It is used chiefly with indefinite qualifying words such as *a*, *no*, *some*, *any*, *few*, *many* The meaningful statement is subordinated."

This may be the most authoritative-sounding and widely distributed of the condemnations of *there*, but it is by no means an isolated example:

Robert E. Knoll ("How to Revise a Paper," *College English*, XVIII [Nov. 1956], 95) says "No sentence by a student should contain an expletive—*there is*, *there are*, *it is*, *it was*—for amateur sentences containing expletives are often less meaty than they might be."

W. Earl Britton ("Efficient Writing," *TWE Journal*, Spring, 1956, p. 33) says that the expletive can produce illogical and needless subordination; he advocates revising such constructions as

There are portions of his writing, however, where his personal feelings are injected into the story
to read

In portions of his writing, however, his personal feelings are evident.

Otto Jespersen (*Modern English Grammar*, III, p. 148) says "It is worth remarking that all cases [of contact clauses] in which the relative subject can be omitted in present-day natural speech have this in common that there is [sic] some more or less meaningless existential phrase either preceding the clause (it is . . . , there are . . .) or in it (. . . there is)."

An extended controversy in *Word Study* brought out comments from both critics and defenders of the construction. Editor

Max Herzberg began the discussion (XXXI [Feb., 1956], 4) by noting the objection by Otis Miller of Texas A&M to the expletive *there* used to introduce a sentence. Herzberg pointed out that the usage was condemned by neither Fowler nor Webster's, and cited a group of celebrated *there* constructions which he thought impossible to improve by revision (for example: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God"). Miller's reply (XXXII [December, 1956], 7-8) rejects Fowler and Webster as final authorities, disposes of the cited constructions, and reiterates the contention that a construction beginning with an expletive (here he includes it with *there*) is weak, indefinite, and "an indication of a lazy mind." In the last phase of the controversy (XXXIII [December, 1957], 5-6), Herzberg adduced another example; George E. McCracken referred to Horace in the original (*sunt quos*) and in translation (*there are*); John I. Ades took an example of an unrevisable construction from Luke ("And there were in the same country shepherds"); Osborne L. Gomez defended *there* constructions on the basis of acceptance in standard usage, and of loss of rhythm and balance through revision ("Giants were in the earth in those days" for "There were giants . . .").

Two things are clear even from this condensed blacklist. First, these proscriptions are based on theories that are not entirely uniform. And second, neither critics nor defenders have been careful always to distinguish clearly among the types of expletive constructions, or even *there* constructions. Little objection can be made to the principle of Earl Britton's criticism of "*there are . . . where*" constructions on the ground of "needless subordination," once the principle of emphatic position is made clear. On the other hand, there is good reason to be sus-

picious of a blanket condemnation, in terms like "meaningless," "vague," "weak," or "indefinite," of what is virtually an irreplaceable construction: there with the substantive verb (e.g., there is no God).

Even the most cursory examination of the history of the substantive verb *be* in English shows that the number of possible constructions has been dramatically reduced over the centuries. A not uncommon survival in sub-standard English uses it:

if it is any way that I can get her out I wish . . . (8021)

Fries AEG, p. 243

And standard cultivated (and rather bookish) English uses exist, which I shall discuss in just a moment. But, these constructions once set aside, the remainder of expressions of the substantive verb make use of *there*.

When considering the utility of the *there* construction, one sometimes loses sight of a characteristic that this usage shares with other types of inversion, some of which make use of words not usually considered expletives.

I ensware you ther can be no more done
Henry VIII, letter 7

it is a hart broken mother . . . hu has to suffer (8005)

Fries AEG, p. 243

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls?

Lilacs XI

The characteristic shared by these examples and by the substantive constructions discussed is a shift in emphasis. And if we consider the context or the effect of the passages, it becomes clear that that shift produces a gain in emphasis. If, for example, Henry VIII had written "I assure you no more can be done," the passage would probably have continued

nor can any more diligence be used, nor can all manner of dangers be better foreseen and provided for.

As it was, the inversion permitted a construction more emphatic by reason of greater economy:

I assure you there can be no more done, nor more diligence used, nor all manner of dangers better both foreseen and provided for.

Similarly, if the line from Fries' *American English Grammar* is obverted (a heart-broken mother has to suffer), the emphasis

is shifted to such a degree that some would be inclined to say the sentence has been mistranslated. Perception of this gain through inversion is, of course, not new; Curme (*Grammar of the English Language*, III: Syntax, p. 9) attributes it to suspense; Fowler (*Modern English Usage*, "inversion") terms it "balance inversion." It was perceived by the pamphleteer who wrote "These are the times that try men's souls," and by the translator who wrote "Let there be light, and there was light." But it is well to consider this kind of gain when faced with the possible losses by critics of the expletive. And it is certainly important to point out, as neither critics nor defenders of these constructions with the substantive verb have done, the way in which that type of construction combines the utility of emphasis with an even more fundamental utility.

For example, note the position of the principal verb and the type of modifiers in the following construction:

One time there was a boy named Jasper that lived up on Crane Creek

Randolph, Church House, p. 97

One might cite pages of these constructions, partly to show the rather restricted limits within which they vary, and still have a very minute sampling; the great majority of tales begin this way, the proportion rising in some speech cultures to include virtually all tales.

The pattern, of course, is inversion of the substantive verb and its subject with *there* at the head of the construction. Modifiers almost always refer to time, frequently to place, and occasionally to additional conditions. The constructions are being used to say "such-and-such or so-and-so exists or existed, at such a time or place or under such conditions."

The example just cited is, of course, linguistically naive, and for that reason may seem less applicable to my stylistic argument than the following group, which is linguistically sophisticated. Note, however, that both have the same contextual characteristics; one might apply to them Fries' term "situation utterance units" (*Structure of English*, p. 37). That is, constructions in both groups are used to begin units of communication—stories, essays, paragraphs, etc.

There is a well-known incident in one of Moliere's plays, where the author makes the hero express unbounded delight . . .
Huxley, *Method*, p. 464

There were tides in the new earth, long before there was an ocean

Carson, *Sea*, p. 470

Surrender was complete. There was no water . . . There was no dynamite.

London, *Story*, p. 515

The writers represented here could hardly be called chronically lazy minds or habitually slovenly stylists; but, what is more important, this last list purposely does not represent the gleanings of a vast quantity of writing, but simply run-of-the-mine from fifty pages of collected expository prose (Brooks & Warren's *Modern Rhetoric*). Neither does the list represent all expletive constructions, and certainly not all inversions for rhetorical effect.

Not only is it clear that the *there* construction with the substantive verb is not rare; it is also clear that if it is to be translated, *exist* is most often one's only choice. (Of course, rather than be translated, the construction can sometimes be avoided—it has largely been avoided throughout this paper, for example, in order to avoid diverting attention from the matter to the manner. But this is simply to say that any formal restriction can be observed if necessary.) If we are to translate

There were tides in the new earth, long before there was an ocean,
it is almost inevitable that we will arrive at

Tides existed in the new earth long before an ocean existed.

For notice that we cannot say, as some

critics of the expletive seem to demand, "The new earth tided before it oceaned." The analysis of *exist* in Webster's makes it clear that it appears in contexts identical to the *there* construction:

With *exist* are often associated certain accompaniments or limitations of being, in time, place, or circumstance; as, the danger exists only in imagination, or a vast quantity of water exists as vapor.

Of the various objections that can be made to a rule requiring such translations with *exist*, the most immediate would probably be that it is bookish. It seems to me that two pieces of evidence substantiate this subjective opinion. For one thing, as the Oxford English Dictionary points out, "the late appearance of the word is remarkable." It is, in fact, the last to appear of the common translations for the meanings of the verb *be*, in many cases by a wide margin; existence had been in the language for more than 200 years when *exist* first appeared in 1602. For another thing, *exist* is of demonstrably rarer occurrence than most of the other translations for *be* (even though it could not be considered really a rare word); along with only such words as *occur* and *represent*, *exist* falls short of one hundred occurrences per million in the Thorndike-Lorge count. (The following table gives date of first appearance from the OED and frequency data from Thorndike and Lorge's *The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words*.)

Be or partial synonym	Date of first Appearance	Occ./mill.	Frequency Lorge Mag.	Thorndike Sem.
appear	1388	100+	1162	1740
be	885	100+	19645	—
become	888	100+	1191	1940
EXIST	1602	50+	352	675
happen	1375	100+	1933	766
mean	1000	100+	2373	3004
occur	1538	50+	400	641
remain	1375	100+	867	1510
represent	1380	50+	249	700
seem	1225	100+	4577	3056

There seems to be evidence, then, if evidence be needed, to support our reluctance to substitute in all cases the rather formal *exist* for the quite idiomatic *there* construction.

Even more clearly illogical, perhaps, is the notion that we should, or even could translate "There was no water" (from the Jack London account of the San Francisco quake) as "No water existed" or "Water did not exist." The utility of the *there* construction in examples of this kind is clearly that this usage permits the implication "in this place, at this time, under these conditions" without direct statement.

With an eye to these virtues of the *there* construction with the substantive verb, I think we can see that much criticism of such usages is basically a criticism of inept statements of existence, even when they happen to avoid the *there* construction, as in the following example:

With the unity of these two countries, Syria and Egypt, has come the existence of a stronger democracy.

or of inept use of an expletive even when not used with the substantive verb, like

There were many old cars manufactured since 1916, which fall into three classes:

classics, special interest cars, and ordinary cars.

Certainly it will be difficult to agree with Evans or Jespersen that positing existence is meaningless when we recognize the advantages of emphatic inversion, and the

utility and even necessity of positing existence in this form.

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Non-restrictive Participles As Adverbs

Five dull books dealing with American literature, having been defaced by bored students, were taken to the office of the principal.

For years most of us who teach English have been trying to make students understand why having been defaced by bored students is non-restrictive and set off with commas whereas dealing with American literature is restrictive and should not be set off. We can usually make the student see that the restrictive phrase is an adjective, but when we try to show him that the non-restrictive phrase is also an adjective he tells us that he cannot see how. He is right. The non-restrictive participle is not an adjective, but an adverb.

That *having been defaced, etc.*, is not an adjective is clear if we try the normal adjective questions—Which? What kind of? How many? These questions will elicit from the student the responses *five, dull, dealing with American literature, American, bored, and of the principal*, along with the appropriate noun. But these questions will not give us the non-restrictive phrase.

If, however, we try the adverbial question *When? or Why?*, the student will give us the information contained in that non-restrictive phrase. Furthermore, he will give it to us not in a participial phrase, but in an adverbial clause or phrase: *after (or because) they had been defaced by bored students or after having been defaced by bored students*. With a clearer vision than his teachers have, the student who has resisted our telling him that this construction is adjectival has sensed that the non-restrictive phrase is a kind of elliptical version of an adverbial clause. It is true that this non-restrictive phrase describes the subject, but in much the same way as any predication describes its subject. Actually, it attaches itself to the subject because it needs a subject, but it modifies the predication, as most adverbs do.

The adverbial (non-restrictive) participial phrase may indicate merely a time relation-

ship or may imply other adverbial relationships as well—cause, concession, condition, or result:

Whistling merrily, John walked down the street. (simultaneous action)

Feeling sick, John went home. (time and cause)

John, knowing nothing about airplanes, climbed into the cockpit and took over the controls. (time and concession. Adding *nevertheless before climbed* makes the participle clearly concessive.)

Failing to pay your bills, you will be prosecuted. (time and condition)

He tripped over the rug, falling flat on the floor. (time and result)

In the last sentence, the student addicted to dangling trailing result participles will prefer *He tripped over the rug, causing him to fall flat on the floor*, but at least he is aware of the adverbial meaning of the phrase. [Insert commas after student and participles in the previous sentence; the phrase thus set off shifts from telling which student to why he prefers the construction.]

So far, teaching the student that the non-restrictive participle is adverbial is the only way I have found to help him distinguish consistently between the two types of participles. Though the pitch-pause method works, too few students hear it accurately. Recasting the sentence into a compound predicate (*He tripped over the rug and fell flat*) works with some, but is substituting another construction with a slightly different meaning instead of making the student understand the participial construction. Moving the phrase to another position will usually identify the non-restrictive participle readily (only adverbs normally move about the sentence freely without changing the meaning), but not if the participle expresses result. *Falling flat on the floor*, he tripped over the rug is such nonsense that the student may think the participial phrase must be restrictive because it cannot be moved.

But since I have tried teaching the students to see the restrictive participle as adjectival and the non-restrictive participle as adverbial, the problem of punctuation seems less difficult for them, and many of them

seem able to read participial sentences and make sense of them.

JAMES T. NARDIN
Colorado State College

English Departments in Indiana

It is possible to dispel certain existing ignorance about the profession of teaching English. Probably this is the most important conclusion to be drawn from a study of English departments in Indiana colleges and universities between January and March, 1955. The project was approved by the CCCC Executive Committee (including an allotment of \$200) and undertaken during a leave granted from the writer's home institution, Ball State Teachers College. The purpose of the effort was to prove that usable information about college English departments could be gathered at a feasible cost. The information was gathered primarily through two questionnaires, one for department heads and one for staff members from 28 schools out of an estimated 300 on duty in 37 institutions. Nineteen department heads replied. In addition, all information on English departments in college catalogs was tabulated. The processing of the information collected continued until the end of 1956, at which time a report of the basic finding mentioned above was made to the CCCC Executive Committee. The present statement is a result of a request by a subcommittee of the CCCC Executive Committee that some suitable general publication be made.

It would be possible to write at great length about the data yielded by the Indiana study, but the writer accepts the idea that his sampling of actual information is too limited to warrant extensive discussion or distribution. The research was visualized as a "pilot" study to indicate kinds of information (as opposed to surmise, opinion, belief, or prejudice) needed and available about teaching English on the college level. There is no doubt in the writer's mind that the study has yielded valuable information, but none of it is so important as the fact that we do not need to be as unknowing as we are about our task. Nonetheless, a few examples of useful specific information gathered just from this one state may well be in order.

Perhaps one of the more dramatic examples would be found in the analysis of ele-

ments included in catalog descriptions of courses in freshman composition. Because this course is so universally required, it might well be thought that the course would be rather routine in content, if not, as is more generally obvious, in manner. Of course, it is well known that catalog descriptions are not notably dependable in their accuracy, but, notwithstanding, it is rather astounding to find that an organized list of elements mentioned in such descriptions takes six typed pages. It is necessary to set up a dozen different categories to accommodate the diverse elements, which range from a generalized statement that the course will involve "communication skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening" to specification of a certain number of conferences between student and teacher or the use of a named textbook. Most of the elements deal unsurprisingly with writing, speaking, reading, listening, and thinking.

But under writing one has to establish nineteen different categories to describe the kinds mentioned (as short story, prosody, biography, letters, argumentation, research paper) and eighteen to deal with technical factors (as grammar, diction, outlining, paragraphing, rhetoric, punctuation). Speaking requires only eight categories, but reading needs eighteen. Listening and thinking require only four categories apiece.

Perhaps the writer's objection to this mélange will become clearer in the light of the responses of the 148 teachers when they were asked to identify the basic objectives of courses primarily concerned with written and oral expression. The chief objectives mentioned with the number of times mentioned were: effective expression of ideas, 71; clarity, 57; proper usage, 35; logical thought (thinking), 29; organization, 15; simplicity, 7; forcefulness, 7. None of the 95 other items, some impinging on those already mentioned, occurred more than five times.

What is the point of mentioning these facts? It would appear that the teachers had a much better-defined idea of what they were doing than did the schools they

worked for. It seems quite appropriate that CCCC or NCTE should encourage the college English teachers of this country to stipulate the generally-recognized basic elements of freshman composition. This could simplify catalog descriptions, facilitate transfer of credits, establish their task more firmly in the minds of confused high school teachers, and generally encourage respect for the course which takes the energy and attention of the greater part of those who call themselves English teachers. The same applies, of course, to basic courses in literature.

Another kind of ignorance which this example brings to mind refers to the attitudes of heads of departments, deans of instruction, and presidents of institutions. Many college catalogs do not specify how the function of the English department is conceived, though there are a few diverse statements to be considered. The researcher was astonished to find that heads of departments generally left blank that part of the questionnaire which invited them to differentiate between the skills and attitudes deemed desirable achievements for the general student, the minor student, and the major student. Certainly, if there is general ignorance about the specifics related to these types of training, it is regrettable and inhibitory to the best effort English teachers can make. There need not be ignorance about this.

A totally different kind of example is that related to a perennial problem of the English teacher, that of his feeling that he is, after all, perhaps the only one in the school who cares anything about how the language is used and his realization that no amount of insistence on certain procedures in English class is going to be effective if other people encourage the student in ignoring or forgetting those procedures. This concept or problem is here referred to as the "all-college maintenance of standards." Both department members and heads were questioned about this matter. The results may be only summarized here, but, as might be anticipated, nearly 90 percent of English faculty thought "all college instructors should share the responsibility of maintaining standards of oral and written work." They also had a series of eight basic sug-

gestions for procedure in achieving this goal. But nearly half of the departments had no program at all for achieving the goal, and others certainly were not using the ideas proved to be latent in their personnel.

Perhaps it is time now to turn to areas of ignorance other than academic. Certainly the post-war period has seen an increased concern with the status, economic and social, of the teacher. Many respondents left blank questions dealing with matters of promotion and tenure, teacher appraisal, and departmental organization, indicating (as some specifically stated) that they did not know what to think about such matters. The profession, perhaps thereby truly becoming a profession, should search its mind on these matters and see to it that all its membership understand the implications of participation in it.

A factor related to the professional status of all college teachers should certainly be mentioned. A great loss in the administration of colleges and universities is the fact that many, if not most, schools have not found, and at times have not wanted to find, a way to use the talents of faculty to improve the education process. The people in English departments over the nation need to think just how far they have gone in making democratic use of faculty motivations and talents (on the part of heads of departments and other administrators) and how far they have gone to deserve the franchise and responsibility concomitant with democratic action (on the part of staff members). No doubt any teacher or administrator will be able to think of elements to study in this area of concern.

The writer is now convinced that we can study our lot and our status, our aims and our methods to make ourselves more productive of good in our day, working with our materials in our way. He has already learned a great deal which he thought illuminated his own task and status. The idea of a full professional study is thus drawn to the attention of the reader in the hope that it will cause further assessment and earlier implementation of the idea.

WILLIAM A. SUTTON
Ball State Teachers
College

Preadmission Remedial English: An Experiment

The instructor volunteers to teach the preadmission remedial course during eight weeks of the summer session. This means that he is highly optimistic or mad or broke. His students, for the most part, are applicants for admission who through testing have been found deficient in English. At the end of the course the instructor rules on the disposition of the applicants: the student is either admitted or rejected. This decision often becomes a case of conscience, especially when there are foreign students involved or perhaps pretty girls.

In the summer of 1957 I decided to teach the course as a workshop in applied English grammar, composition, and reading comprehension. I dispensed, however, with the conventional exercise book because it seems to invite a mechanical application of knowledge to the problems of using language. It is virtually forced to categorize its questions so that they are answerable by association, not intellectual perception and discrimination. I chose instead to use the blackboard and to compel the students to contrive their own illustrations of rules and usage.

They, however, were required to buy a college handbook (Harcourt, Brace), a dictionary (New Webster), and a thousand Vis-Ed vocabulary cards. Each night they were asked to learn forty words, to write out the full dictionary definition of these words including pronunciation and syllabication, and to use each of these words to illustrate the aspect of grammar which had been assigned. I started with the simple declarative sentence, reviewing parts of speech, case, number, gender, person, tense, and so on. I used the vocabulary cards and the dictionary concurrently to permit two different forms of visual learning, the latter presumably countering the mechanical memorization of words without reference to shades of meaning.

I was forced, of course, to accommodate class procedures to this view of teaching. I began each period by sending five of my fifteen students to the board. Each was given a group of six words to be used in demonstration of a certain point of usage. While they wrote, I questioned the remainder of the class on synonyms and antonyms of the vocabulary for which they were responsible on a given day. Later these same students corrected the written work of their classmates at the board, explaining any

changes that they made. I conducted the class in this manner until we had covered every phase of the sentence (syntax, phrases, clauses, and verbals), punctuation, and other mechanics. Ordinarily I followed the arrangement of topics in the handbook.

When I reached the paragraph, the board work was continued. After the class had learned to write four- or five-sentence paragraphs competently, I began to require short essays of three or four paragraphs, the topic of which was stated the day before. Here again the students applied their knowledge of composition in correcting the paragraphs. And it was my feeling that informal discussions of such things as unity, coherence, clearness, and transitions were very effective in clarifying the meaning of terms which, in many instances, remain no more than terms in the student's mind.

At the end of this phase of the course, I began to experiment with the problem of reading comprehension. First, I used a metropolitan newspaper. Students were given five minutes to read a short column, and then I would ask questions on the information communicated. At the beginning I focused on the facts, but later I asked more abstract questions about the purpose behind a specific essay. Mutual criticism and discussion of the answers, of course, still prevailed.

From the newspaper I went to a current issue of *Harper's*, a copy of which I made each student purchase. This time they were given overnight readings. During the class period alternating groups were sent to the board to answer questions that I had prepared. In the process they were asked to make use of the vocabulary of the day and to review aspects of handbook usage previously studied. This amounted to a virtual review of everything that had been covered.

The concluding week of the course was spent in reading the *New Yorker*. No writing was involved, but questions were asked about portions of short stories, essays, poems, comments, and even cartoons. My aim here was to teach the students to rely upon impromptu and unrehearsed responses to factual and interpretive knowledge. The magazine was ideal for the purpose since its wit and humor often veiled the difficulty of the questions asked.

To test the validity of this approach to remedial English, the final examination took the form of the Ohio State University Psy-

chological Test suggested to me by a member of our Psychology department. The test is composed of three parts: synonyms and antonyms, word relationships, and reading comprehension. Incidentally, the word relationships presuppose a thorough understanding of handbook usage. Obviously, the test was designed to evaluate the results of my experiment. Moreover, since it has been found to be a reliable predictor of academic success, it helped to relieve my conscience of its subjective doubts. It is significant that the lowest grade in the class offered a fair prediction of academic success since fifty percent of the freshmen had scored even lower.

A Look at the New Look in Freshman English

Six years ago I last taught a class in Freshman English. This month I shall teach Freshman English again. During this past summer of 1957 I have been reviewing textbooks, reading many articles in *College English* and elsewhere, and browsing among college freshman themes written during the past year. The impressions I have received from my self-administered refresher course are at this time the impressions of an "outsider" and may be of interest and value to Freshman English instructors.

My first impression has been that the work to which I am returning has become diffuse, overly complex, and that the teachers of Freshman English are trying to accomplish too much. Some Freshman English instructors, accepting into their classes quite complacently high school graduates who have written little, read little, and thought little, consider their job to be to give these graduates in one quarter or one semester a preparatory course for college. Other teachers of Freshman English have become integrators of communication skills, trying to teach students not only to listen and to speak but to read as well as to write. Some of the terminology in a syllabus on freshman communication, group dynamics, semantic orientation, and linguistic sensitivity suggests how complex the work has become. In still other classes attempts are made to attain all of the objectives discussed in this paragraph and in addition give the students training in eliminating spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical offenses. (In these classes in which so much is attempted, the outright disappearance or camouflage of spelling, punctuation, and other errors in the oral communication work

I make no claims in regard to the efficiency of my approach to the problem of remedial English. I only know that the psychologist who had suggested the Ohio State test was somewhat amazed at the results. As to the head of the Admissions Office, I've had lunch on him a dozen times without protest. But seriously I feel that high schools ought to teach a course modeled after this one; and perhaps a few summer sessions at other colleges ought to devote themselves to an experiment in this vein.

WILLIAM BYSSHE STEIN
Washington and
Jefferson College

must exasperate the instructors who, despite any syllabus assigned, consider teaching correct English to be the most important part of the course.)

A second impression is that much material in Freshman English courses is beyond the understanding of the students and is not meeting an urgent need. Much effort is expended to get freshmen to become aware of tone, diction, rhythm, style and to acquaint them with sophisticated ideas about the concept of freedom and civilization and the problem of evil in various world cultures. In many prose readers most of the selections seem too complicated for most freshmen, and much of the instruction the freshman gets in tone and style does not seem pertinent to his struggle for the first time with elementary ideas in his other classes. My impression is that many English classes are not providing training in idea organization, an immediate training needed by freshmen who write outlines similar to the following:

- (1) Thesis sentence: I believe in euthanasia for several reasons.
 - I. Explanation of euthanasia
 - II. Points for euthanasia
 - III. Points against euthanasia
 - IV. My opinion.
- (2) Thesis sentence: The United States should not have socialized medicine.
 - I. Socialism kills free enterprise.
 - II. Quality of doctors could decline when a country has socialized medicine.
 - III. Voluntary medical insurance is quite popular with several American working people.
 - IV. The government's entry into a business is often accompanied by considerable graft and mismanagement.
- (3) Thesis sentence: Personality is judged by one's success in adjust-

ing to environment and fellow humans.

- I. Definition of personality
- II. Ways of obtaining good adjustment
- III. Advantages of good adjustment
- IV. Effect of personal adjustment on personality.

The students who wrote these outlines need help in organizing thoughts with sound logic. They need discipline in careful use of the inductive and deductive processes. This is the need that is glaring and urgent.

Teaching freshman students how to listen well, teaching them how to speak well,

introducing them through reading to new worlds of art, philosophical ideas, and rhetorical elegancies are worth-while objectives. This I grant readily, but an instructor who pursues these objectives ought to be certain that his students are not in need primarily of assistance in organizing the simple thoughts with which they are already familiar.

PHIL E. HAGER

College of Puget Sound

One Way Out, Perhaps

Editor

Koleje Kompozition and Komunikaſion

I have written to every member uv the exekutive komitee uv the NKTE, exsept you. It so hapenz that the national problem uv moronik speling aproachez kloser to English teacherz than to anyone else within our edukational aparatus. Only a few uv them have—so far—seen fit to thank me for the presentation uv my extrememly sarkastik and insulting litle book. (I Give You a Higher Standard uv Speling).

For some yearz I attempted to fight our moronik bad-habit on a dignified and intellectual basis. But it waz no go! My chief weapon iz now sheathed in ridikule—koated over with a veneer uv pity and parental understanding. My koleaguez in England are being indused by yourz truly to folow this stratejy uv atak in shaming their teacherz into a ful rekognition uv the fakt that moronik speling kan not be sedately indulged in forever—exsept by moronz. The blistering stiger within this stratejy iz that our speling truly iz moronik—and shal ever remain so—in every non-moronik mind!!! And it iz justifiably aproprate that the volvmnt in an ansiently stupid use uv letterz kould hardly be regarded az being kompatible to any proud and kultured mind. And it iz justifiably aproprate that the higher one'z edukation may be, the deeper must become one'z shame and humiliation for kondoning it—or for uzing one shalow exkuse after another for NOT doing anything about it.

To say that you and your fellow-teacherz are too konservative to do anything about it woud only serve to aksentuate a fault in your karakter, quite un-admirable to this writer. You do not ride to your klasez in an ox-kart—but you are forsed to spel as if you did, but the forse that forse you to do

so iz no stronger than your own failure to rezist it. Duke University iz not built uv klay be-kauze non-defeatists had the vizion to invent something beter. Duke'z Mixture haz grown into a filter-tiped sigarete, but our speling waz moronik before the white man knew what tobako waz. Sientifik progres expandz in every direktion—but one—in which it meetz an inexplikable vakuum, in the last plase on earth where any perspikuos child woud expekt to find it, within the skul-kavity uv his teacher!

There izn't one lik uv sense in uzing double-konsonantz—and there never haz been—and no doktor uv this or that haz ever kontended that there waz; but show me the doktor who haz gutz enough to quit uzing them! And every doktor knowz that hard-C iz a very weak-minded way to expres the sound uv K and so doez every child. The orthodox mind iz like a wax rekord. It kan repeat itz erorz over and over and over—but, having no intelekt, it haz no power to korekt itz erorz. And when a child speakz up to make theze korektionz, he iz met with a silense so deadly that one kould kut it with a knife!

If you are the good sport I hope you are, you will take this leter and booklet in stride and join my army uv sarkastik ridikulerz. There iz nothing like pity to make a snob take a look at himself.

Yourz truly

Jorj W. Maurer.

POSTSKRIPT:

Nobody kan stand up against ridikule. When it kan be baked up with the overwelmnng forse uv truth, it iz the most devastating weapon. Voltaire—who waz forsed to live in exile most uv the time—with this weapon—drastikaly chanjed the kourse uv European history.

J. M.

NSSC News

The Summer Conference of NSSC met at the Y.M.C.A. Estes Park Conference, Colorado, August 29 to September 1. Lou Cherbeneau of *The Denver Post* was in charge of local arrangements.

The program, consisting of four business meetings and five panels on "Communicating about Communication" was arranged by Francis A. Cartier of Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, who will take office as President of NSSC on January 1, 1959.

The first panel, under the chairmanship of W. Charles Redding, Purdue University, discussed "Censorship." Participants were Jean Ackerman, television writer and producer, KPIX, San Francisco, and Kenneth A. Harwood, Head of the Department of Telecommunication, University of Southern California.

The panel, "Books about Communication," was chaired by C. Merton Babcock, Michigan State University. Members John Haney, Air Force Academy, Edgar DeForest of Ventura College, California, and Wayne N. Thompson, University of Illinois (Chicago) reviewed the following books:

Texts

Babcock, C. Merton, *The Harper Handbook of Communication Skills*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1957. (\$4.75)

Dean, Howard H., *Effective Communication*, Prentice-Hall Company, New York, 1953. (\$4.95)

Hackett, H., and others, *Understanding and Being Understood*, Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1957. (\$4.75)

Johnson, Ray Ivan, and others, *Communication: Handling Ideas Effectively*, McGraw-Hill Company, New York, 1956. (\$4.50)

Thompson, Wayne N., *Fundamentals of Communication; An Integrated Approach*, McGraw-Hill Company, New York, 1957. (\$5.00)

Books on TV and Mass Communication
Schramm, Wilbur, *Responsibility in Mass Communication*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1958. (\$4.50)

Scipmann, Charles A., *TV and the School Crisis*, Dodd Mead and Company, New York, 1958. (\$4.00)

The panel composed of John Keltner, Kansas State College, Chairman, Merle Ogle, Air University, Thorrel Fest, University of Colorado, and Carl Wilson, South Dakota State College, discussing "Reporting Research in Communication," came to the following conclusions:

1. There is a need for more genuine research in communication.
2. *The Journal of Communication* should devote additional space to research.
3. Research should be reported in the form which will best serve the purpose of the intended consumers.

For the "General Semantics" session Elwood Murray, University of Denver, with several of his former students, demonstrated a laboratory in interpersonal relations. Keith Case, also of Denver University, discussed practical applications of general semantics in reading problems.

The last panel meeting, on "Teaching Communication," was chaired by Anne McGurk, Michigan State University. The first speaker, Edgar DeForest, Ventura College, California, gave valuable suggestions on improving comprehension and vocabulary and distributed materials on current techniques and information in the field of reading. Teachers interested in obtaining copies of these practical materials should write to: Dr. Edgar DeForest, Ventura College, Ventura, California.

Nora Landmark, Michigan State University, in discussing "Teaching the Integrated Course," first presented the rationale of such a course, and then posed

a number of questions, not a definitive list, however, which stimulated a lively discussion. Following are several of the questions considered:

1. Is there a common body of knowledge underlying listening, speaking, reading, and writing which, if understood, makes one an intelligent communicator?
2. Is there a specialized body of knowledge underlying a particular communication skill which must be a part of a course content?
3. If so, and if this specialized body becomes extensive, does the idea of an integrated course break down?
4. Does teaching communication skills in unison scatter rather than concentrate attention?
5. Is teaching communication skills practical in the face of rising class size?
6. Is there an adequate number of persons trained to teach communication in an integrated course?

The business meetings were under the chairmanship of the president of NSSC, Donald E. Bird of Stephens College.

Of the items of business transacted, the following might be of interest to members of CCCC:

John Wilcox, University of Denver,

as the new Director of Information Services, will be able to provide interested persons with materials on communication.

Seth Fessenden, the Executive Secretary, will receive applications to membership in NSSC. (Address: Toastmasters International, Santa Ana, California)

Ralph G. Nichols, reporting for the Listening Comprehension Committee, presented a plan for organizing statewide listening and reading competition, which would provide college scholarships for winning students. Teachers interested in securing information about such contests should write to Ralph G. Nichols, Head of Department of Rhetoric, University of Minnesota at St. Paul.

Articles for publication in the *Journal of Communication* should be sent to the newly elected editor, Dr. Wayne N. Thompson, University of Illinois, Navy Pier, Chicago 11, Illinois.

The time and place of the next Summer Conference of NSSC will be announced in the subsequent *Journal of Communication*.

ANNE MCGURK

Among the New Texts

COLLEGE WRITING, by Cecil B. Williams and John Ball (Ronald, 475 pp., \$3.75) and UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH, by Paul Roberts (Harper, 508 pp., \$3.75).

A teacher who does not want to be the first to try the new or the last to quit the old will choose neither of these texts. Like Perrin's *Index* years ago, *Understanding English* breaks new ground. It is the first book for the freshman course to be based consistently on the point of view of linguistic science. "The assumptions and findings of modern experts on language study have nowhere been knowingly ignored or set aside," Williams and Ball, on the other hand, use the old plow to plow the old ground again. They do not commit them-

selves like Roberts to a single point of view, but draw, or profess to draw, from linguistics, psychology, and anthropology. Their bid to the student is to practicality (How Writing is Related to Success in College) and they proceed by "presenting the entire field of writing and relating it to post-college writing." Thus Part IV, *Specialized College Writing*, covers research papers, critical writing, letter writing, and report writing; Part V, *Advanced College Writing*, covers creative writing (poetry, short story, non-fiction articles, radio and television, together with advice on publication), journalism, public relations, and advertising, and, finally, scholarly writing. Except for the sections on letter and report writing

(the two authors have texts in these fields), it is hard to see any value to students in these 200 sketchy pages of definition, classification, and how-to advice.

Behind all the differences that make these texts polar opposites lie different conceptions of how the teacher of freshmen is to meet his commitment. Is it better to have them memorize all the classifications and definitions and rules of traditional grammar and rhetoric and then tell them in no uncertain terms what to do and what not to do? Or is it better to appeal to their understanding—to try to communicate to them our recently won knowledge of the nature and operation of language and then train them to observe and compare and thus to discriminate and choose? Is it better, for example, to exhort them to "resolve to use the dictionary far more than you have up to now" or, as Roberts does, to teach them how to quarrel with their dictionary? We have had two centuries of experience with one method; but we have to take the other largely on faith. Only experience in the classroom will tell whether understanding English can be made to pay off.

L. M. Myers and W. W. Watt have shown that textbooks for teaching writing can be well written. In tone and style Roberts is close to Myers, his style an easy, natural colloquial English, sometimes slangy, even crude. Williams and Ball have not solved the problem of tone satisfactorily; hence their style is self-conscious and mannered, much given to rhetorical questions and heavy transitions.

F. C.

CREATIVE EXPOSITION, Alexander E. Jones (Henry Holt, 579 pp., \$4.75)

This book was written from the conviction that contemporary exposition is creative as well as analytical, that it "stimulates as well as informs," and that it "uses most of the techniques hitherto reserved for fiction." It differs from most other texts used in expository writing in its inclusiveness and even more in its emphasis.

Inevitably, of course, much traditional and basic material is included. Part I takes up the nature of exposition, the various types of prose, the gathering and organizing of material, writing and reviewing the long paper. Part II, the liveliest section of the book, is given over to the differences between articles and essays, and all the various types of exposition—from the short article and the "collective" to character

sketches and other descriptive and narrative articles and essays. Part III is a handbook of style, containing, along with chapters on grammar, punctuation, diction, etc., a chapter called "Rhythm and Movement," which because of its sensible approach to a difficult aspect of style should be most helpful to the student.

Creative Exposition is a complete course in expository writing. The articles and essays included for illustration and example are generally varied and fresh—unanthologized; the lists of topics for assignments are not just the same old stuff; and the questions for discussion have been given more careful thought than is sometimes the case in books of this sort.

N. C.

THE LOGIC AND RHETORIC OF EXPOSITION, Harold C. Martin (Rinehart, 204 pp., \$2).

INQUIRY AND EXPRESSION: A COLLEGE READER, ed. Harold C. Martin and Richard M. Ohmann (Rinehart, 750 pp., \$5).

Although in neither of the prefaces to these two books is the other text mentioned, they are obviously intended to be used together, and they form a strong team indeed. The title of Professor Martin's text describes it clearly: it is intended for a course in exposition and it is founded unflinchingly and properly on the principles of logic and those of rhetoric. Since writing inevitably begins in thinking and since no writing can be better than the thinking in which it begins or of which the writer is capable, development of the student's ability to think well is, one may suppose, a sound approach. This book is for "average and better-than-average students," the latter rather than the former, perhaps, since there is "an emphasis on the serious side of higher education" and no compromise with the latter-day folly of educational theory which tries to make everything simple and easy for the student.

The first part of **THE LOGIC AND RHETORIC OF EXPOSITION** "adapts a few important matters in logic to the immediate purposes of the writer,"—defining and describing, asserting, proving, and persuading. The second part "presents the familiar matters of rhetoric" so as to help the student "to something better than desultory acceptance of imposed dicta about form"; sections deal with the rhetoric of

the sentence, logic and strategy in paragraph and essay, and diction. The concluding part of the book is "concerned with mechanics, footnotes, and bibliography."

INQUIRY AND EXPRESSION follows the pattern of its companion. Part one, "The Processes of Inquiry," "clearly analytic in method and content," deals with defining, asserting, and proving. Part two, "The Means and Modes of Expression," deals with "skills in rhetoric," concrete and abstract language, figurative language, stock language, economy of style, coherence, rhythm, tone, distance, emphasis, satire, parody, and irony. The selections themselves are excellent, ingeniously if not brilliantly chosen and arranged. Of them the editors write, "Although they are not all of the same quality, none—we believe—is likely to deprave the student's taste or corrupt his mind. They represent the labors of serious men working out the serious matters of their own lives in ways which they respect. To study the writing of such men is itself worth while . . ."

These are sound texts, well written and well edited. As has been suggested, they are for the serious student of good or superior ability. They ought to be used, and they deserve the success which it seems likely they will have.

C. V. WICKER

University of New Mexico

INTEGRATED FRESHMAN ENGLISH, Joseph A. Rogers (Rhinehart, 3rd ed., 247 pp., \$2.50, paper).

A student will have two advantages in his use of this third edition: a good grounding in the fundamentals of composition, and an appealing introduction to Western Culture from the model exercises taken from Homer, Virgil, and other classicists. Many instructors will appreciate Rogers' use of diagrams to explain sentence structure, and the ample page space to work the assigned problems.

F. J. W.

READING FOR WRITING, ed. Arthur Mizener (Henry Holt, 323 pp., \$3.25).

The major sections in this freshman anthology are comparison and contrast, separation and discrimination, enumeration, autobiography, feeling and attitude, and definition. The first essay of each section is followed by a detailed analysis to bring out main ideas and structure; subsequent essays

are followed by questions and suggested topics for writing to develop from the essays. Thus, approximately 40% of the book is editorial commentary. The selections are primarily contemporary with the writers including Langer, Seldes, Becker, Tate, Schlesinger, Trilling, Cooke, Thurber, Drucker, Severeid, Mencken, E. B. White, and Edmund Wilson. Preoccupation of the writing is usually humanistic and cultural. Non-contemporary writers include Macaulay, Bacon, Edmund Burke, and Keynes.

H. H. C.

THOUGHT IN PROSE, ed. Richard S. Beal and Jacob Korg (Prentice-Hall, 611 pp., \$5.25).

These editors group anthologies for the freshman course into three types. They think that emphasis on rhetorical patterns reduces writing to a mechanical matter with no encouragement to the inquiry and self-examination essential to mature writing and that emphasis on communication diverts the course from writing to study of the operation of language. They have chosen the third type, organized around the "recurrent questions of general education," as most likely to keep writing central in the course and enrich it with readings that do promote inquiry and self-examination. Despite this choice, Beal and Korg, like their competition, try to straddle the three types. For the rhetoric-centered course they have supplied an appendix on the methods and aims of prose, where the one hundred readings are classified by rhetorical criteria into analysis, classification, etc., and again into narration, description, etc. For the language-centered course they have provided more usable essays on language than the general run of anthologies of this type.

The readings are arranged in twenty-one groups under seven major headings: Interpreting Experience; Language, Thought, and Ideas; Man in Society; Science: Principles and Practice; Knowledge and Value; Popular Culture; Literature and the Arts. These are familiar topics, but the selections are not familiar. They are a fresh and interesting choice, not too long or too difficult, mostly well written, accompanied by few but provocative study questions.

F. C.

IDEAS IN CONTEXT, Joseph Satin (Houghton Mifflin, 393 pp. \$2 paper).

Students should derive much help from this group of 52 short articles in getting

subjects for their papers. These are all taken from works with some bearing on current life. At the end of each article there are usually questions on its technique and content, and there is also a varied list of five suggested topics.

Instructors will appreciate the brief introductions to many divisions of the three parts of this book of readings that has a colorful modernistic cover. They will also like the two tables at the end of the text. One arranges the articles according to their subjects, there are 16; and the other lists them under rhetorical principles, of which there are 16.

F. J. W.

IDEAS IN PROGRESS, ed. C. Merton Babcock (Harpers, 436 pp., \$4.00)

A truly new anthology: twenty-eight of its forty selections postdate 1950. Much of the best writing comes from new anthology sources, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Fortune*, *New Yorker*, *Vogue*, *Readers' Digest*, *School and Society*, *Saturday Review*, *Journalism Quarterly*, *AAUP Journal*, and *Reporter*. The writers tend to be iconoclastic, for instance, Drucker on philosophy, Langer and Lloyd on language, Hutchins on education, Thurber on people, Mott and Steinbeck on mass media. The result is stimulative, but not faddish since several historical and conservative articles maintain perspective. Excellent discussion exercises help to promote reading into understanding and expression. —Harry H. Crosby, Writing Supervisor, Communications Skills, University of Iowa.

H. H. C.

A PREFACE TO OUR DAY, ed. Dwight L. Durling, Eleanor M. Sickels, and Helen Gill Viljoen (Dryden, 3rd ed., 660 pp., \$4.75).

The editors, all of Queens College, have carefully compiled a group of forty-three essays, each accompanied by a biographical notice and by suggestions and questions. The essays, of which about half are before this century and about a quarter from the last four years, appear under the three major headings of "Sciences of Nature and Man," "Conflict and Change in Social Thought," and "Inner Resources and Values." An introductory survey on "The Writer's Craft" compresses much that needs to be said into twenty pages.

G. A.

PROSE READINGS: IMPRESSIONS AND IDEAS, ed. William M. Sale, Jr. (Rinehart, 367 pp., \$1.90, paper).

The 42 selections in this anthology are grouped in eight untitled selections and aimed at "a reasonably intelligent person." Its authors include frequently anthologized Clarence King, Lynes, Drucker, Becker, Rebecca West, William James, Bertrand Russell, Leacock, Thoreau, Krutch, Lippman and Orwell, and the less frequently represented Hans Zinsser, Herbert Muller, Haldane, and Henry Adams, all welcome additions. The essays are unaccompanied by footnotes or exegesis, but a preface suggests an analytical apparatus. The writing is gentlemanly, ruminant, and low-pressure, the printing and format readable and attractive.

H. H. C.

CHAMBER'S TWENTIETH CENTURY DICTIONARY, ed. William Geddies (Tapping Publishing Co., 1364 pp. \$4.95).

This is a desk dictionary of British English with about the same number of items as are found in our standard desk dictionaries. It lacks the treatments of synonyms which we find in ours, but it contains a useful list of prefixes and suffixes, including some suffixes which are not given in ours. Its chief usefulness to an American is in showing the differences in vocabulary and pronunciation between the English used on each side of the Atlantic, especially in marginal items like slang, abbreviations, honorifics, and regional terms, thus giving readers of British books more information in such areas than they will find in American dictionaries.

S. I.

ENGLISH EXERCISES, English as a Foreign Language, Forms A and B, Angela Paratore (Rinehart and Co., \$1.25, paper).

One of the major problems in teaching English as a foreign language is getting proper drill material. Both forms of this book contain a hundred exercises on grammar, answers at the back, and an index. There is no explanatory material, other than directions for the exercises, and no phonology. The exercises are designed for students who have already learned the basic structures of English but require additional drill in specific usages. The exercises contain, on the average, about twenty-five short items each. The number of exercises on each problem is adjusted to the frequency of student errors, according to experience at Indiana University.

S. I.

ARE YOU LISTENING?, Ralph G. Nichols and Leonard A. Stevens (McGraw-Hill, 235 pp., \$3.75).

Although it wastes too much time on Dale Carnegie-type anecdotes, testimonials and success stories insisting that listening should be taught in industry and college, this book demonstrates that listening is an essential "ingredient in participation." The system of dividing note-taking into two

systems, thesis-seeking or facts and principles-seeking, makes possible some constructive suggestions. The "steps to better listening" are practical and specific. The hints on how to compensate for propaganda cover a tired topic in a fresh and helpful manner. Even the suggestions on how to improve small talk make good sense.

H. H. C.

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